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EDGAR HUNTLY,

OR MEMOIRS OF A

SLEEP-WALKER.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

C. B. BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

Arthur Mervyn, Wieland, Ormond, &c.

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EDGAR HUNTLY.

CHAP. I.

THINK not that I relate these things with exultation or tranquillity: all my education and the habits of my life tended to unfit me for a contest and a scene like this. But I was not governed by the soul which usually regulates my conduct: I had imbibed from the unparalleled events which had lately happened,

a spirit vengeful, unrelenting, and ferocious.

There was now an interval for flight; throwing my weapons away, I might gain the thicket in a moment: I had no ammunition, nor would time be afforded me to re-load my piece; my antagonist would render my poniard and my speed of no use to me: should he miss me as I fled, the girl would remain to expiate, by her agonies and death, the fate of his companions.

These thoughts passed through my mind in a shorter time than is demanded to express them; they yielded to an expedient suggested by the sight of the gun that had been raised to destroy the girl, and which now lay upon the ground. I

am

am not large of bone, but am not deficient in agility and strength: all that remained to me of these qualities was now exerted; and dropping my own piece, I leaped upon the bank, and flew to seize my prize.

It was not till I snatched it from the ground, that the propriety of regaining my former post rushed upon my apprehension. He that was still posted in the hovel would mark me through the seams of the wall, and render my destruction sure. I once more ran towards the bank, with the intention to throw myself below it: all this was performed in an instant; but my vigilant foe was aware of his advantage, and fired through an opening between the logs: the bullet grazed my cheek, and produced a benumbing sen-

sation that made me instantly fall to the earth. Though bereaved of strength, and fraught with the belief that I had received a mortal wound, my caution was not remitted; I loosened not my grasp of the gun; and the posture into which I accidentally fell, enabled me to keep an eye upon the house, and a hand upon the trigger. Perceiving my condition, the savage rushed from his covert in order to complete his work; but at three steps from the threshold he received my bullet in his breast. The uplifted tomahawk fell from his hand, and uttering a loud shriek, he fell upon the body of his companion: his cries struck upon my heart, and I wished that his better fortune had cast this evil from him upon me.

Thus

Thus I have told thee a bloody and disastrous tale: when thou reflectest on the mildness of my habits, my antipathy to scenes of violence and bloodshed, my unacquaintance with the use of fire-arms, and the motives of a soldier, thou wilt scarcely allow credit to my story: that one rushing into these dangers, unfurnished with stratagems or weapons, disheartened and enfeebled by hardships and pain, should subdue four antagonists, trained from their infancy to the artifices and exertions of Indian warfare, will seem the vision of fancy, rather than the lesson of truth.

I lifted my head from the ground and, pondered upon the scene: the magnitude of this exploit made me question its reality. By attending to my own sen-

sations, I discovered that I had received no wound, or at least none of which there was reason to complain: the blood flowed plentifully from my cheek, but the injury was superficial. It was otherwise with my antagonists: the last that had fallen now ceased to groan: their huge limbs, inured to combat and *war-worn*, were useless to their own defence, and to the injury of others.

The destruction that I witnessed was vast.—Three beings, full of energy and heroism, endowed with minds strenuous and lofty, poured out their lives before me: I was the instrument of their destruction—this scene of carnage and blood was laid by me; to this havoc and horror was I led by such rapid footsteps!

My

My anguish was mingled with astonishment: in spite of the force and uniformity with which my senses were impressed by external objects, the transition I had undergone was so wild and inexplicable—all that I had performed, all that I had witnessed since my egress from the pit, were so contradictory to precedent events, that I still clung to the belief that my thoughts were confused by delirium. From these reveries I was at length recalled by the groans of the girl, who lay near me on the ground.

I went to her, and endeavoured to console her. I found that while lying in the bed she had received a blow upon the side, which was still productive of acute pain: she was unable to rise or to walk, and it was plain that one or more

of her ribs had been fractured by the blow.

I knew not what means to devise for our mutual relief: it was possible that the nearest dwelling was many leagues distant: I knew not in what direction to go in order to find it, and my strength would not suffice to carry my wounded companion thither in my arms: there was no expedient but to remain in this field of blood till the morning.

I had scarcely formed this resolution before the report of a musket was heard at a small distance: at the same moment I distinctly heard the whistling of a bullet near me. I now remembered that of the five Indians whom I saw in the cavern, I was acquainted with the destiny

tiny only of four: the fifth might be still alive, and Fortune might reserve for him the task of avenging his companions: his steps might now be tending hither in search of them.

The musket belonging to him who was shot upon the threshold, was still charged: it was discreet to make all the provision in my power against danger: I possessed myself of his gun, and seating myself on the ground, looked carefully on all sides, to descry the approach of the enemy—I listened with breathless eagerness.

Presently voices were heard; they ascended from that part of the thicket from which my view was intercepted by the cottage: these voices had something

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One stopped, and bespeaking the attention of his followers, called to know who was there. I answered that I was a friend, who entreated their assistance. I shall not paint their astonishment when, on coming nearer, they beheld me surrounded by the arms and dead bodies of my enemies.

I sat upon the ground, supporting my head with my left hand, and resting on my knee the stock of a heavy musket: my countenance was wan and haggard, my neck and bosom were died in blood, and my limbs, almost stripped by the brambles of their slender covering, were lacerated by a thousand wounds. Three savages, two of whom were steeped in gore, lay at a small distance, with the traces of recent life on their visages.

Hard by was the girl, venting her anguish in the deepest groans, and entreating relief from the new comers.

One of the company, on approaching the girl, betrayed the utmost perturbation.

"Good God!" he cried, "is this a dream?—Can it be you?—Speak!"

"Ah, my father! my father!" answered she, "it is I indeed!"

The company, attracted by this dialogue, crowded round the girl, whom her father, clasping in his arms, lifted from the ground, and pressed in a transport of joy to his breast. This delight was succeeded by solicitude respecting

ing her condition. She could only answer his enquiries by complaining that her side was bruised to pieces: "How came you here? Who hurt you? Where did the Indians carry you?" were questions to which she could make no reply but by sobs and plaints.

My own calamities were forgotten in contemplating the fondness and compassion of the man for his child: I derived new joy from reflecting that I had not abandoned her, and that she owed her preservation to my efforts. The enquiries which the girl was unable to answer, were now put to me: every one interrogated who I was, whence I had come, and what had given rise to this bloody contest.

I was not willing to expatiate on my story: the spirit which had hitherto sustained me began now to subside; my strength ebbed away with my blood; tremors, lassitude, and deadly cold invaded me, and I fainted on the ground.

Such is the capricious constitution of the human mind! While dangers were at hand, while my life was to be preserved only by zeal and vigilance and courage, I was not wanting to myself: had my perils continued, or even multiplied, no doubt my energies would have kept equal pace with them; but the moment that I was encompassed by protectors, and placed in security, I grew powerless and faint. My weakness was proportioned to the duration and intensity of my previous efforts, and the swoon into which

which I now sunk was no doubt mistaken by the spectators for death.

On recovering from this swoon my sensations were not unlike those which I had experienced on awaking in the pit:—for a moment a mistiness involved every object, and I was able to distinguish nothing: my sight by rapid degrees was restored, my painful dizziness was banished, and I surveyed the scene before me with anxiety and wonder.

I found myself stretched upon the ground. I perceived the cottage and the neighbouring thicket, illuminated by a declining moon. My head rested upon something, which, on turning to examine, I found to be one of the slain Indians: the other two remained upon

the

the earth at a small distance, and in the attitudes in which they had fallen: their arms, the wounded girl, and the troop who were near me when I fainted, were gone.

My head had reposed upon the breast of him whom I had shot in this part of his body: the blood had ceased to ooze from the wound; but my dishevelled locks were matted and steeped in that gore which had overflowed and choked up the orifice. I started from this detestable pillow, and regained my feet.

I did not suddenly recall what had lately passed, or comprehend the nature of my situation: at length, however, late events were recollected.

That

That I should be abandoned in this forlorn state by these men, seemed to argue a degree of cowardice or cruelty of which I should have thought them incapable. Presently, however, I reflected that appearances might have easily misled them into a belief of my death:—on this supposition, to have carried me away, or to have stayed beside me, would be useless: other enemies might be abroad, or their families, now that their fears were somewhat tranquillized, might require their presence and protection.

I went into the cottage. The fire still burned, and afforded me a genial warmth. I sat before it, and began to ruminate on the state to which I was reduced, and on the measures I should next pursue.

Daylight

Daylight could not be very distant: should I remain in this hovel till the morning, or immediately resume my journey? I was feeble, indeed; but by remaining here, should I not increase my feebleness? The sooner I should gain some human habitation the better; whereas watchfulness and hunger would render me at each minute less able to proceed than on the former.

This spot might be visited on the next day; but this was involved in uncertainty: the visitants, should any come, would come merely to examine and bury the dead, and bring with them neither the clothing nor the food which my necessities demanded. The road was sufficiently discernible, and would unavoidably conduct me to some dwelling.

I determined,

I determined, therefore, to set out without delay. Even in this state I was not unmindful that my safety might require the precaution of being armed: besides, the fusee which had been given me by Sarsefield, and which I had so unexpectedly recovered, had lost none of its value in my eyes: I hoped that it had escaped the search of the troop who had been here, and still lay below the bank in the spot where I had dropped it.

In this hope I was not deceived—it was found: I possessed myself of the powder and shot belonging to one of the savages, and loaded it. Thus equipped for defence, I regained the road, and proceeded with alacrity on my way. For the wound in my cheek Nature had provided a styptic; but the soreness was extreme,

extreme, and I thought of no remedy but water, with which I might wash away the blood; my thirst likewise incommoded me, and I looked with eagerness for the traces of a spring. In a soil like that of the wilderness around me, nothing was less to be expected than to light upon water. In this respect, however, my destiny was propitious: I quickly perceived water in the ruts:—it trickled hither from the thicket on one side, and pursuing it among the bushes, I reached the bubbling source: though scanty and brackish, it afforded me unspeakable refreshment.

Thou wilt think perhaps that my perils were now at an end—that the blood I had already shed was sufficient for my safety: I fervently hoped that no new exigence would

would occur, compelling me to use the arms that I bore in my own defence; I formed a sort of resolution to shun the contest with a new enemy, almost at the expence of my own life; I was satiated and gorged with slaughter, and thought upon a new act of destruction with abhorrence and loathing.

But though I dreaded to encounter a new enemy, I was sensible that an enemy might possibly be at hand. I had moved forward with caution, and my sight and hearing were attentive to the slightest tokens. Other troops, besides that which I encountered, might be hovering near, and of that troop I remembered that one at least had survived.

The gratification which the spring had afforded

afforded me was so great, that I was in no haste to depart. I lay upon a rock, which chanced to be shaded by a tree behind me: from this post I could overlook the road to some distance, and at the same time be shaded from the observation of others.

My eye was now caught by movements which appeared like those of a beast: in different circumstances I should have instantly supposed it to be a wolf, or panther, or bear; now my suspicions were alive on a different account, and my startled fancy figured to itself nothing but a human adversary.

A thicket was on either side of the road: that opposite to my station was discontinued at a small distance by the

cultivated field; the road continued along this field, bounded by the thicket on the one side, and the open space on the other: to this space the being, who was now descried, was cautiously approaching.

He moved upon all fours, and presently came near enough to be distinguished. His disfigured limbs, pendants from his ears and nose, and his shorn locks, were indubitable indications of a savage: occasionally he reared himself above the bushes, and scanned with suspicious vigilance the cottage and the space surrounding it; then he stooped, and crept along as before.

I was at no loss to interpret these appearances—this was my surviving enemy: he was unacquainted with the fate of his associates,

associates, and was now approaching the theatre of carnage, to ascertain their fate.

Once more was the advantage afforded me: from this spot might unerring aim be taken, and the last of this hostile troop be made to share the fate of the rest:—should I fire, or suffer him to pass in safety?

My abhorrence of bloodshed was not abated; but I had not foreseen this occurrence. My success hitherto had seemed to depend upon a combination of fortunate incidents, which could not be expected again to take place; but now was I invested with the same power: the mark was near—nothing obstructed or delayed;

delayed; I incurred no danger, and the event was certain.

Why should he be suffered to live? He came hither to murder and despoil my friends; this work he has no doubt performed: nay, has he not borne his part in the destruction of my uncle and my sisters? He will live only to pursue the same sanguinary trade, to drink the blood and exult in the laments of his unhappy foes, and of my own brethren. Fate has reserved him for a bloody and violent death: for how long a time soever it may be deferred, it is thus that his career will inevitably terminate.

Should he be spared, he will still roam in the wilderness, and I may again be fated to encounter him: then our mutual

situation may be widely different, and the advantage I now possess may be his.

While hastily revolving these thoughts, I was thoroughly aware that one event might take place which would render all deliberation useless. Should he spy me where I lay, my fluctuations must end—my safety would indispensibly require me to shoot. This persuasion made me keep a steadfast eye upon his motions, and be prepared to anticipate his assault.

It now most seasonably occurred to me that one essential duty remained to be performed: one operation, without which fire-arms are useless, had been unaccountably omitted—my piece was uncocked. I did not reflect that in moving

moving the spring a sound would necessarily be produced sufficient to alarm him; but I knew that the chances of escaping his notice, should I be perfectly mute and still, were extremely slender, and that, in such a case, his movements would be quicker than the light; it behoved me, therefore, to repair my omission.

The sound struck him with alarm: he turned and darted at me an enquiring glance. I saw that forbearance was no longer in my power; but my heart sunk while I complied with what may surely be deemed an indispensible necessity. This faltering perhaps it was that made me swerve somewhat from the fatal line: he was disabled by the wound, but not killed.

He lost all power of resistance, and was therefore no longer to be dreaded: he rolled upon the ground, uttering doleful shrieks, and throwing his limbs into those contortions which bespeak the keenest agonies to which ill-fated man is subject. Horror and compassion and remorse were mingled into one sentiment, and took possession of my heart: to shut out this spectacle, I withdrew from the spot, but I stopped before I had moved beyond hearing of his cries.

The impulse that drove me from the scene was pusillanimous and cowardly: the past, however deplorable, could not be recalled; but could not I afford some relief to this wretch?—could not I, at least, bring his pangs to a speedy close? Thus he might continue, writhing and

calling upon death for hours. Why should his miseries be uselessly prolonged?

There was but one way to end them: to kill him outright was the dictate of compassion and of duty. I hastily returned, and once more levelled my piece at his head: it was a loathsome obligation, and was performed with unconquerable reluctance. Thus to assault and to mangle the body of an enemy already prostrate and powerless, was an act worthy of abhorrence; yet it was, in this case, prescribed by pity.

My faltering hand rendered this second bullet ineffectual: one expedient, still more detestable, remained. Having gone thus far, it would have been inhuman to

stop short: his heart might easily be pierced by the bayonet, and his struggles would cease.

This task of cruel lenity was at length finished. I dropped the weapon, and threw myself on the ground, overpowered by the horrors of this scene. Such are the deeds which perverse Nature compels thousands of rational beings to perform and to witness—such is the spectacle, endlessly prolonged and diversified, which is exhibited in every field of battle, of which habit and example, the temptations of gain, and the illusions of honour, will make us, not reluctant or indifferent, but zealous and delighted actors and beholders!

Thus, by a series of events impossible to

to be computed or foreseen, was the destruction of a band selected from their fellows for an arduous enterprise, distinguished by prowess and skill, and equally armed against surprise and force, completed by the hand of a boy, uninured to hostility, unprovided with arms, precipitate and timorous! I have noted men who seemed born for no end but by their achievements to belie experience and baffle foresight, and outstrip belief. Would to God that I had not deserved to be numbered among these! But what power was it that called me from the sleep of death just in time to escape the merciless knife of this enemy? Had my swoon continued till he had reached the spot, he would have effectuated my death by new wounds, and torn away the skin from my brows. Such are the subtile

threads on which hangs the fate of man and of the universe!

While engaged in these reflections, I perceived that the moonlight had began to fade before that of the sun; a dusky and reddish hue spread itself over the east. Cheered by this appearance, I once more resumed my feet and the road. I left the savage where he lay, but made prize of his tomahawk: I had left my own in the cavern, and this weapon added little to my burden. Prompted by some freak of fancy, I stuck his musket in the ground, and left it standing upright in the middle of the road.

CHAP. II.

I MOVED forward with as quick a pace as my feeble limbs would permit: I did not allow myself to meditate. The great object of my wishes was a dwelling where food and repose might be procured. I looked earnestly forward, and on each side, in search of some token of human residence; but the spots of cultivation, the *well-pole*, the *worm-fence*, and the hay-rick, were no where to be seen; I did not even meet with a wild hog, or a bewildered cow. The path was narrow,

and on either side was a trackless wilderness: on the right and left were the waving lines of mountainous ridges, which had no peculiarity enabling me to ascertain whether I had ever before seen them.

At length I noticed that the tracks of wheels had disappeared from the path that I was treading; that it became more narrow, and exhibited fewer marks of being frequented. These appearances were discouraging: I now suspected that I had taken a wrong direction, and instead of approaching, was receding from the habitation of men.

It was wisest, however, to proceed: the road could not but have some origin, as well as end. Some hours passed away in

in this uncertainty. The sun rose, and by noonday I seemed to be further than ever from the end of my toils; the path was more obscure, and the wilderness more rugged: thirst more incommoded me than hunger, but relief was seasonably afforded by the brooks that flowed across the path.

Coming to one of these, and having slaked my thirst, I sat down upon the bank, to reflect on my situation: the circuity of the path had frequently been noticed, and I began to suspect that though I had travelled long, I had not moved far from the spot where I had commenced my pilgrimage.

Turning my eyes on all sides, I noticed a sort of pool, formed by the

rivulet, at a few paces distant from the road: in approaching and inspecting it, I observed the footsteps of cattle, who had retired by a path that seemed much beaten; I likewise noticed a cedar bucket, broken and old, lying on the margin. These tokens revived my drooping spirits, and I betook myself to this new track: it was intricate; but at length led up a steep, the summit of which was of better soil than that of which the flats consisted. A clover field and several apple-trees, sure attendants of man, were now discovered: from this space I entered a corn-field; and at length, to my inexpressible joy, caught a glimpse of a house.

This dwelling was far different from that I had lately left: it was as small and

as

as low, but its walls consisted of boards; a window of four panes admitted the light, and a chimney of brick, well burned, and neatly arranged, peeped over the roof: as I approached, I heard the voice of children and the hum of a spinning-wheel.

I cannot make thee conceive the delight which was afforded me by all these tokens. I now found myself indeed among beings like myself, and from whom hospitable entertainment might be confidently expected. I compassed the house, and made my appearance at the door.

A good woman, busy at her wheel, with two children playing on the ground before her, were the objects that now presented

presented themselves. The uncouthness of my garb, my wild and weather-worn appearance, my fusee and tomahawk, could not but startle them. The woman stopped her wheel, and gazed as if a spectre had sprung into view.

I was somewhat aware of these consequences, and endeavoured to elude them, by assuming an air of supplication and humility. I told her that I was a traveller, who had unfortunately lost his way, and had rambled in this wild till nearly famished for want: I entreated her to give me some food; any thing, however scanty or coarse, would be acceptable.

After some pause she desired me, though not without some marks of fear,

to

to walk in. She placed before me some brown bread and milk: she eyed me while I eagerly devoured this morsel; it was indeed more delicious than any I had ever tasted. At length she broke silence, and expressed her astonishment and commisseration at my seemingly forlorn state, adding that perhaps I was the man whom the men were looking after who had been there some hours before.

My curiosity was roused by this intimation. In answer to my interrogations, she said that three persons had lately stopped, to enquire if her husband had not met, within the last three days, a person of whom their description seemed pretty much to suit my person and dress: he was tall, slender, wore nothing but a shirt

a shirt and trowsers, and was wounded on the cheek.

"What," I asked, "did they state the rank or condition of the person to be?"

He lived in Solebury. He was supposed to have rambled in the mountains, and to have lost his way, or to have met with some mischance. It was three days since he had disappeared, but had been seen by some one the last night at Deb's hut.

What and where was Deb's hut?

It was a hut in the wilderness, occupied by an old Indian woman, known among her neighbours by the name of Old

Old Deb; some people called her Queen Mab: her dwelling was eight *long* miles from this house.

A thousand questions were precluded, and a thousand doubts solved by this information. *Queen Mab* were sounds familiar to my ears; for they originated with myself.

This woman originally belonged to the tribes of Delawares or Lennilennapee: all these districts were once comprised within the dominions of that nation. About thirty years ago, in consequence of perpetual encroachments of the English colonists, they abandoned their ancient seats, and retired to the banks of the Wabash and Muskingum.

This

This emigration was concerted in a general council of the tribe, and obtained the concurrence of all but one female: her birth, talents, and age gave her much consideration and authority among her countrymen; and all her zeal and eloquence were exerted to induce them to lay aside their scheme: in this, however, she could not succeed. Finding them refractory, she declared her resolution to remain behind, and maintain possession of the land which her countrymen should impiously abandon.

The village inhabited by this clan was built upon the ground which now constitutes my uncle's barn-yard and orchard. On the departure of her countrymen, this female burned the empty wigwams, and retired into the fastnesses of Norwalk.

Norwalk. She selected a spot suitable for an Indian dwelling, and a small plantation of maize, and in which she was seldom liable to interruption and intrusion.

Her only companions were three dogs, of the Indian or wolf species: these animals differed in nothing from their kinsmen of the forest, but in their attachment and obedience to their mistress: she governed them with absolute sway; they were her servants and protectors, and attended her person, or guarded her threshold, agreeable to her directions: she fed them with corn, and they supplied her and themselves with meat, by hunting squirrels, racoons, and rabbits.

To the rest of mankind they were aliens or enemies. They never left the desert but in company with their mistress; and when she entered a farm-house, waited her return at a distance: they would suffer none to approach them; but attacked no one who did not imprudently crave their acquaintance, or who kept at a respectful distance from their wigwam: that sacred asylum they would not suffer to be violated; and no stranger could enter it but at the imminent hazard of his life, unless accompanied and protected by their dame.

The chief employment of this woman, when at home, besides plucking the weeds from among her corn, bruising the grain between two stones, and setting her snares for rabbits and opossums, was to talk.

talk. Though in solitude, her tongue was never at rest but when she was asleep; but her conversation was merely addressed to her dogs. Her voice was sharp and shrill, and her gesticulations were vehement and grotesque. A hearer would naturally imagine that she was scolding; but in truth, she was merely giving them direction. Having no other object of contemplation or subject of discourse, she always found in their postures and looks occasion for praise, or blame, or command. The readiness with which they understood, and the docility with which they obeyed her movements and words, were truly wonderful.

If a stranger chanced to wander near her hut, and overhear her jargon, incessant as it was and shrill, he might speculate

culate in vain on the reason of these sounds: if he waited in expectation of hearing some reply, he waited in vain. The strain, always voluble and sharp, was never intermitted for a moment, and would continue for hours at a time.

She seldom left the hut but to visit the neighbouring inhabitants, and demand from them food and clothing, or whatever her necessities required: these were exacted as her due; to have her wants supplied was her prerogative, and to withhold what she claimed was rebellion. She conceived that by remaining behind her countrymen she succeeded to the government, and retained the possession of all this region. The English were aliens and sojourners, who occupied the land merely by her connivance

and

and permission, and whom she allowed to remain on no terms but those of supplying her wants.

Being a woman aged and harmless, her demands being limited to that of which she really stood in need, and which her own industry could not procure, her pretensions were a subject of mirth and good-humour, and her injunctions obeyed with seeming deference and gravity. To me she early became an object of curiosity and speculation: I delighted to observe her habits and humour her prejudices. She frequently came to my uncle's house, and I sometimes visited her; insensibly she seemed to contract an affection for me, and regarded me with more complacency and condescension than any other received.

She

She always disdained to speak English, and custom had rendered her intelligible to most in her native language, with regard to a few simple questions. I had taken some pains to study her jargon, and could make out to discourse with her on the few ideas which she possessed: this circumstance, likewise, wonderfully prepossessed her in my favour.

The name by which she was formerly known was Deb; but her pretensions to royalty, the wildness of her aspect and garb, her shrivelled and diminutive form, a constitution that seemed to defy the ravages of time and the influence of the elements, her age, which some did not scruple to affirm exceeded a hundred years, her romantic solitude and mountainous haunts, suggested to my fancy the

the appellation of *Queen Mab.* There appeared to me some rude analogy between this personage and her whom the Poets of old time have delighted to celebrate: thou, perhaps, wilt discover nothing but incongruities between them; but, be that as it may, Old Deb and Queen Mab soon came into indiscriminate and general use.

She dwelt in Norwalk upwards of twenty years. She was not forgotten by her countrymen, and generally received from her brothers and sons an autumnal visit; but no solicitations or entreaties could prevail on her to return with them. Two years ago some suspicion or disgust induced her to forsake her ancient habitation, and to seek a new one. Happily, she found a more conve-

nient habitation twenty miles to the westward, and in a spot abundantly sterile and rude.

This dwelling was of logs, and had been erected by a Scottish emigrant, who not being rich enough to purchase land, and entertaining a passion for solitude and independence, cleared a field in the unappropriated wilderness, and subsisted on its produce. After some time he disappeared: various conjectures were formed as to the cause of his absence; none of them were satisfactory; but that which obtained most credit was, that he had been murdered by the Indians who, about the same period, paid their annual visit to the *Queen*. This conjecture acquired some force by observing that the old woman shortly after took possession of

of his hut, his implements of tillage, and his corn-field.

She was not molested in her new abode; and her life passed in the same quiet tenor as before. Her periodical rambles, her regal claims, her guardian wolves, and her uncouth volubility were equally remarkable; but her circuits were new. Her distance made her visits to Solebury more rare, and had prevented me from ever extending my pedestrian excursions to her present abode.

These recollections were now suddenly called up by the information of my hostess. The hut where I had sought shelter and relief was, it seems, the residence of Queen Mab. Some fortunate occurrence had called her away during

my visit: had she and her dogs been at home, I should have been set upon by these ferocious centinels, and, before their dame could have interfered, have been, together with my helpless companion, mangled or killed: these animals never barked, I should have entered unaware of my danger, and my fate could scarcely have been averted by my fusee.

Her absence at this unseasonable hour was mysterious. It was now the time of year when her countrymen were accustomed to renew their visit:—was there a league between her and the plunderers whom I had encountered?

But who were they by whom my footsteps were so industriously traced?

Those whom I had seen at Deb's hut were strangers to me; but the wound upon my face was known only to them. To this circumstance was now added my place of residence and name. I supposed them impressed with the belief that I was dead; but this mistake must have speedily been rectified: revisiting the spot, finding me gone, and obtaining some intelligence of my former condition, they had instituted a search after me.

But what tidings were these? I was supposed to have been bewildered in the mountains, and three days were said to have passed since my disappearance: twelve hours had scarcely elapsed since I emerged from the cavern: had two days and a half been consumed in my subterranean prison?

These reflections were quickly supplanted by others. I now gained a sufficient acquaintance with the region that was spread around me. I was in the midst of a vale, included between ridges that gradually approached each other, and when joined, were broken up into hollows and steeps, and spreading themselves over a circular space, assumed the appellation of Norwalk: this vale gradually widened as it tended to the westward; and was in this place ten or twelve miles in breadth. My devious footsteps had brought me to the foot of the southern barrier: the outer basis of this was laved by the river; but, as it tended eastward, the mountain and river receded from each other, and one of the cultivable districts lying between them was Solebury, my natal *township:* hither it

was

was now my duty to return with the utmost expedition.

There were two ways before me: one lay along the interior base of the hill, over a sterile and trackless space, and exposed to the encounter of savages, some of whom might possibly be lurking here; the other was the well-frequented road, on the outside and along the river, and which was to be gained by passing over this hill. The practicability of the passage was to be ascertained by enquiries made to my hostess: she pointed out a path that led to the rocky summit and down to the river's brink; the path was not easy to be kept in view, or to be trodden, but it was undoubtedly to be preferred to any other.

A route somewhat circuitous would terminate in the river road; thence-forward the way to Solebury was level and direct: but the whole space which I had to traverse was not less than thirty miles: in six hours it would be night, and to perform the journey in that time, would demand the agile boundings of a leopard and the indefatigable sinews of an elk.

My frame was in miserable plight; my strength had been assailed by anguish and fear and watchfulness, by toil and abstinence and wounds; still, however, some remnant was left: would it not enable me to reach my home by night-fall? I had delighted from my child-hood in feats of agility and perseverance: in roving through the maize of thickets

thickets and precipices I had put my energies, both moral and physical, frequently to the test; greater achievements than this had been performed; and I disdained to be outdone in perspicacity by the lynx, in his sure-footed instinct by the roe, or in patience under hardship and contention with fatigue, by the Mohawk: I have ever aspired to transcend the rest of animals in all that is common to the rational and brute, as well as in all by which they are distinguished from each other.

CHAP. III.

I LIKEWISE burned with impatience to know the condition of my family, to dissipate at once their tormenting doubts and my own with regard to our mutual safety: the evil that I feared had befallen them was too enormous to allow me to repose in suspense, and my restlessness and ominous forebodings would be more intolerable than any hardship or toils to which I could possibly be subjected during this journey.

I was

I was much refreshed and invigorated by the food that I had taken, and by the rest of an hour: with this stock of recruited force, I determined to scale the hill. After receiving minute directions, and returning many thanks for my hospitable entertainment, I set out.

The path was indeed intricate, and deliberate attention was obliged to be exerted in order to preserve it: hence my progress was slower than I wished. The first impulse was to fix my eye upon the summit, and to leap from crag to crag till I reached it; but this my experience had taught me was impracticable: it was only by winding through gullies, and coasting precipices and bestriding chasms, that I could hope finally to gain the top; and I was assured that by one

way only was it possible to accomplish even this.

An hour was spent in struggling with impediments, and I seemed to have gained no way: hence a doubt was suggested whether I had not missed the true road: in this doubt I was confirmed by the difficulties which now grew up before me. The brooks, the angles, and the hollows which my hostess had described, were not to be seen: instead of these, deeper dells, more headlong torrents, and wider gaping rifts were incessantly encountered.

To return was as hopeless as to proceed. I consoled myself with thinking that the survey which my informant had made of the hill-side, might prove inaccurate, and

and that, in spite of her predictions, the heights might be reached by other means than by those pointed out by her. I will not enumerate my toilsome expedients, my frequent disappointments, and my desperate exertions; suffice it to say, that I gained the upper space not till the sun had dipped beneath the horizon.

My satisfaction at accomplishing thus much was not small; and I hied, with renovated spirits, to the opposite brow: this proved to be a steep that could not be descended; the river flowed at its foot; the opposite bank was five hundred yards distant, and was equally towering and steep as that on which I stood. Appearances were adapted to persuade you that these rocks had formerly joined; but by some mighty effort of Nature had

had been severed, that the stream might find way through the chasm. The channel, however, was encumbered with asperities, over which the river fretted and foamed with thundering impetuosity.

I pondered for a while on these stupendous scenes; they ravished my attention from considerations that related to myself: but this interval was short; and I began to measure the descent, in order to ascertain the practicability of treading it. My survey terminated in bitter disappointment. I turned my eye successively eastward and westward: Solebury lay in the former quarter, and thither I desired to go: I kept along the verge in this direction, till I reached an impassable rift; beyond this I saw that the steep grew lower, but it was impossible to proceed

proceed further: higher up the descent might be practicable, and though more distant from Solebury, it was better to reach the road even at that distance, than never to reach it.

Changing my course, therefore, I explored the spaces above. The night was rapidly advancing, the gray clouds gathered in the south-east, and a chilling blast, the usual attendant of a night in October, began to whistle among the pigmy cedars that scantily grew upon these heights. My progress would quickly be arrested by darkness, and it behoved me to provide some place of shelter and repose: no recess, better than a hollow in the rock, presented itself to my anxious scrutiny.

Mean-

Meanwhile I would not dismiss the hope of reaching the road, which I saw some hundred feet below, winding along the edge of the river, before daylight should utterly fail: speedily these hopes derived new vigour from meeting a ledge that irregularly declined from the brow of the hill; it was wide enough to allow of cautious footing. On a similar stratum, or ledge, projecting still further from the body of the hill, and close to the surface of the river, was the road. This stratum ascended from the level of the stream, while that on which I trod rapidly descended: I hoped that they would speedily be blended, or at least approach so near as to allow me to leap from one to the other without enormous hazard.

This

This fond expectation was frustrated. Presently I perceived that the ledge below began to descend, while that above began to tend upward, and was quickly terminated by the uppermost surface of the cliff. Here it was needful to pause. I looked over the brink, and considered whether I might not leap from my present station without endangering my limbs. The road into which I should fall was a rocky pavement, far from being smooth; the descent could not be less than forty or fifty feet: such an attempt was, to the last degree, hazardous; but was it not better to risk my life by leaping from this eminence, than to remain and perish on the top of this inhospitable mountain? The toils which I had endured in reaching this height appeared

appeared to my panic-struck fancy less easy to be borne again than death.

I know not but that I should have finally resolved to leap, had not different views been suggested by observing that the outer edge of the road was, in like manner, the brow of a steep which terminated in the river. The surface of the road was twelve or fifteen feet above the level of the stream, which in this spot was still and smooth: hence I inferred that the water was not of inconsiderable depth. To fall upon rocky points was indeed dangerous; but to plunge into water of sufficient depth, even from a height greater than that at which I now stood, especially to one to whom habit had rendered water almost as congenial

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an element as air, was scarcely attended with inconvenience. This expedient was easy and safe. Twenty yards from this spot the channel was shallow, and to gain the road from the stream was no difficult exploit.

Some disadvantages, however, attended this scheme. The water was smooth, but this might arise from some other cause than its depth: my gun likewise must be left behind me, and that was a loss to which I felt invincible repugnance; to let it fall upon the road would put it in my power to retrieve the possession, but it was likely to be irreparably injured by the fall.

While musing upon this expedient, and weighing injuries with benefits, the night closed

closed upon me. I now considered that, should I emerge in safety from the stream, I should have many miles to travel before I could reach a house: my clothes meanwhile would be loaded with wet; I should be heart-pierced by the icy blast that now blew, and my wounds and bruises would be chafed into insupportable pain.

I reasoned, likewise, on the folly of impatience, and the necessity of repose. By thus long continuance in one posture my sinews began to stiffen, and my reluctance to make new exertions to increase: my brows were heavy, and I felt an irresistible propensity to sleep. I concluded to seek some shelter, and resign myself, my painful recollections, and my mournful presages to sweet forgetfulness:

fulness: for this end, I once more ascended to the surface of the cliff; I dragged my weary feet forward till I found somewhat that promised me the shelter that I sought.

A cluster of cedars appeared, whose branches overarched a space that might be called a bower: it was a slight cavity, whose flooring was composed of loose stones and a few faded leaves blown from a distance, and finding a temporary lodgment here. On one side was a rock, forming a wall rugged and projecting above; at the bottom of the rock was a rift, somewhat resembling a coffin in shape, and not much larger in dimensions: this rift terminated on the opposite side of the rock in an opening that was too small for the body of a man

to

to pass: the distance between each entrance was twice the length of a man.

This bower was open to the south-east, whence the gale now blew: it therefore imperfectly afforded the shelter of which I stood in need; but it was the best that the place and the time afforded: to stop the smaller entrance of the cavity with a stone, and to heap before the other branches lopped from the trees with my hatchet, might somewhat contribute to my comfort.

This was done; and thrusting myself into this recess as far as I was able, I prepared for repose. It might have been reasonably suspected to be the den of rattlesnakes or panthers; but my late contention with superior dangers and

more formidable enemies, made me reckless of these: still another inconvenience remained: in spite of my precautions, my motionless posture and slender covering exposed me so much to the cold that I could not sleep.

The air appeared to have suddenly assumed the temperature of mid-winter: in a short time my extremities were benumbed, and my limbs shivered and ached as if I had been seized by an ague; my bed likewise was dank and uneven, and the posture I was obliged to assume unnatural and painful: it was evident that my purpose could not be answered by remaining here.

I therefore crept forth, and began to reflect upon the possibility of continuing my

my journey: motion was the only thing that could keep me from freezing, and my frame was in that state which allowed me to take no repose in the absence of warmth, since warmth was indispensible. It now occurred to me to ask whether it were not possible to kindle a fire.

Sticks and leaves were at hand; my hatchet and a pebble would enable me to extract a spark; from this, by suitable care and perseverance, I might finally procure sufficient fire to give me comfort and ease, and even enable me to sleep. This boon was delicious, and I felt as if I were unable to support a longer deprivation of it.

I proceeded to execute this scheme. I took the driest leaves, and endeavoured

to

to use them as tinder, but the driest leaves were moistened by the dews: they were only to be found in the hollows, in some of which were pools of water, and others were dank. I was not speedily discouraged; but my repeated attempts failed, and I was finally compelled to relinquish this expedient.

All that now remained, was to wander forth, and keep myself in motion till the morning. The night was likely to prove tempestuous and long; the gale seemed freighted with ice, and acted upon my body like the points of a thousand needles. There was no remedy, and I mustered my patience to endure it.

I returned again to the brow of the hill: I ranged along it till I reached a

place where the descent was perpendicular, and, in consequence of affording no sustenance to trees or bushes, was nearly smooth and bare. There was no road to be seen; and this circumstance, added to the sounds which the rippling current produced, afforded me some knowledge of my situation.

The ledge, along which the road was conducted, disappeared near this spot: the opposite sides of the chasm through which flowed the river, approached nearer to each other, in the form of jutting promontories. I now stood upon the verge of that on the northern side: the water flowed at the foot, but, for the space of ten or twelve feet from the rock, was so shallow, as to permit the traveller and his horse to wade through it, and thus

thus to regain the road which the receding precipice had allowed to be continued on the further side.

I knew the nature and dimensions of this ford; I knew that at a few yards from the rock the channel was of great depth. To leap into it in this place, was a less dangerous exploit than at the spot where I had formerly been tempted to leap; there I was unacquainted with the depth, but here I knew it to be considerable: still there was some ground of hesitation and fear; my present station was loftier, and how deeply I might sink into this gulf, how far the fall and the concussion would bereave me of my presence of mind, I could not determine. This hesitation vanished, and placing my

tomahawk and fusee upon the ground, I prepared to leap.

This purpose was suspended in the moment of its execution, by a faint sound, heard from the quarter whence I had come: it was the warning of men, but had nothing in common with those which I had been accustomed to hear: it was not the howling of a wolf, or the yelling of a panther; these had often been overheard by night, during my last year's excursion to the lakes: my fears whispered that this was the vociferation of a savage.

I was unacquainted with the number of the enemies who had adventured into this district. Whether those whom I had encountered

encountered at *Deb's hut* were of that band whom I had met with in the cavern, was merely a topic of conjecture: there might be a half score of troops, equally numerous, spread over the wilderness, and the signal I had just heard might betoken the approach of one of these: yet by what means they should gain the nook, and what prey they expected to discover, were not easily conceived.

The sounds, somewhat diversified, nearer and rising from different quarters, were again heard: my doubts and apprehensions were increased. What expedient to adopt for my own safety was a subject of rapid meditation; whether to remain stretched upon the ground, or to rise and go forward. Was it likely the

enemy would coast along the edge of the steep? Would they ramble hither to look upon the ample scene which spread on all sides around the base of this rocky pinnacle? In that case, how should I conduct myself? My arms were ready for use. Could I not elude the necessity of shedding more blood? Could I not anticipate their assault by casting myself without delay into the stream?

The sense of danger demanded more attention to be paid to external objects, than to the motives by which my future conduct should be influenced. My post was on a circular projecture, in some degree detached from the body of the hill, the brow of which continued in a straight line, uninterrupted by this projecture, which was somewhat higher than the

the continued summit of the ridge: this line ran at the distance of a few paces from my post. Objects moving along this line could merely be perceived to move, in the present obscurity.

My scrutiny was entirely directed to this quarter. Presently the treading of many feet was heard, and several figures were discovered, following each other in that straight and regular succession which is peculiar to the Indians: they kept along the brow of the hill joining the promontory.—I distinctly marked seven figures in succession.

My resolution was formed: should any one cast his eye hither, sus ect, or discover an enemy, and rush towards me, I determined to start upon my feet,

fire on my foe as he advanced, throw my piece on the ground, and then leap into the river.

Happily, they passed unobservant and in silence. I remained in the same posture for several minutes: at length, just as my alarms began to subside, the hollows before heard arose, and from the same quarter as before. This convinced me that my perils were not at an end. This now appeared to be merely the vanguard, and would speedily be followed by others, against whom the same caution was necessary to be taken.

My eye, anxiously bent the only way by which any one could approach, now discerned a figure, which was indubitably that of a man armed: none other appeared

appeared in company, but doubtless others were near: he approached, stood still, and appeared to gaze steadfastly at the spot where I lay.

The optics of a *Lennilennapee* I knew to be far keener than my own: a log or a couched fawn would never be mistaken for a man, nor a man for a couched fawn or a log; not only a human being would be instantly detected, but a decision be unerringly made whether it were friend or foe. That my prostrate body was the object on which the attention of this vigilant and steadfast gazer was fixed, could not be doubted: yet, since he continued an inactive gazer, there was ground for a possibility to stand upon, that I was not recognised; my fate, therefore, was still in suspense.

This interval was momentary. I marked a movement, which my fears instantly interpreted to be that of levelling a gun at my head. This action was sufficiently conformable to my prognostics. Supposing me to be detected, there was no need for him to change his post; aim might too fatally be taken, and his prey be secured, from the distance at which he now stood.

These images glanced upon my thought, and put an end to my suspense. A single effort placed me on my feet: I fired with a precipitation that precluded the certainty of hitting my mark, dropped my piece upon the ground, and leaped from this tremendous height into the river: I reached the surface, and sunk in a moment to the bottom.

Plunging

Plunging headlong into the water, the impetus created by my fall from such a height, would be slowly resisted by this denser element. Had the depth been less, its resistance would not perhaps have hindered me from being mortally injured against the rocky bottom; had the depth been greater, time enough would not have been allowed me to regain the surface; had I fallen on my side, I should have been bereaved of life or sensibility by the shock which my frame would have received: as it was, my fate was suspended on a thread. To have lost my presence of mind, to have forborne to counteract my sinking for an instant, after I had reached the water, would have made all exertions to regain the air fruitless. To so fortunate a con-

currence of events was thy friend indebted for his safety!

Yet I only emerged from the gulf to encounter new perils: scarcely had I raised my head above the surface, and inhaled the vital breath, when twenty shots were aimed at me from the precipice above. A shower of bullets fell upon the water; some of them did not fall further than two inches from my head. I had not been aware of this new danger, and now that it assailed me, continued gasping for air, and floundering at random: the means of eluding it did not readily occur; my case seemed desperate, and all caution was dismissed.

This state of discomfiting surprise quickly

quickly disappeared. I made myself acquainted at a glance with the position of surrounding objects: I conceived that the opposite bank of the river would afford me most security, and thither I tended with all the expedition in my power.

Meanwhile my safety depended on eluding the bullets that continued incessantly to strike the water at an arm's length from my body: for this end, I plunged beneath the surface, and only rose to inhale fresh air. Presently the firing ceased; the flashes that lately illuminated the bank disappeared, and a certain bustle and murmur of confused voices gave place to solitude and silence.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

I REACHED without difficulty the opposite bank; but the steep was inaccessible. I swam along the edge, in hopes of meeting with some projection or recess, where I might at least rest my weary limbs, and, if it were necessary to recross the river, to lay in a stock of recruited spirits and strength for that purpose. I trusted that the water would speedily become shoal, or that the steep would afford rest to my feet: in both these hopes I was disappointed.

There

There is no one to whom I would yield the superiority in swimming; but my strength, like that of other human beings, had its limits. My previous fatigues had been enormous, and my clothes, heavy with moisture, greatly encumbered and retarded my movements. I had proposed to free myself from this imprisonment, but I foresaw the inconveniences of wandering over this scene in absolute nakedness; and was willing therefore, at whatever hazard, to retain them. I continued to struggle with the current, and to search for the means of scaling the steeps: my search was fruitless, and I began to meditate the recrossing of the river.

Surely my fate has never been paralleled! Where was this series of hardships and

perils to end? No sooner was one calamity eluded, than I was beset by another: I had emerged from abhorred darkness in the heart of the earth, only to endure the extremities of famine, and encounter the fangs of a wild beast; from these I was delivered only to be thrown into the midst of savages, to wage an endless and hopeless war with adepts in killing, with appetites that longed to feast upon my bowels, and to quaff my heart's blood; from these likewise was I rescued, but merely to perish in the gulfs of the river, to welter on unvisited shores, or to be washed far away from curiosity or pity.

Formerly water was not only my field of sport, but my sofa and my bed; I could float for hours on the surface, enjoying

enjoying its delicious cool, almost without the expence of the slightest motion; it was an element as fitted for repose as for exercise: but now the buoyant spirit seemed to have flown: my muscles were shrunk; the air and water were equally congealed, and my most vehement exertions were requisite to sustain me on the surface.

At first I had moved along with my wonted celerity and ease, but quickly my forces were exhausted: my pantings and efforts were augmented, and I saw that to cross the river again was impracticable; I must continue, therefore, to search out some accessible spot in the bank along which I was swimming.

Each

Each moment diminished my stock of strength, and it behoved me to make good my footing before another minute should escape. I continued to swim, to survey the bank, and to make ineffectual attempts to grasp the rock: the shrubs which grew upon it would not uphold me, and the fragments which for a moment inspired me with hope, crumbled away as soon as they were touched.

At length I noticed a pine which was rooted in a crevice near the water: the trunk, or any part of the root, was beyond my reach; but I trusted that I could catch hold of the branch which hung lowest, and that, when caught, it would assist me in gaining the trunk, and thus deliver me from the death

death which could not be otherwise averted.

The attempt was arduous: had it been made when I first reached the bank, no difficulty had attended it; but now, to throw myself some feet above the surface, could scarcely be expected from one whose utmost efforts seemed to be demanded to keep him from sinking: yet this exploit, arduous as it was, was attempted and accomplished. Happily, the twigs were strong enough to sustain my weight till I caught at other branches, and finally placed myself upon the trunk.

This danger was now past; but I admitted the conviction that others no less formidable, remained to be encountered,

tered, and that my ultimate destiny was death. I looked upwards:—new efforts might enable me to gain the summit of this steep; but, perhaps, I should thus be placed merely in the situation from which I had just been delivered: it was of little moment whether the scene of my imprisonment was a dungeon not to be broken, or a summit from which descent was impossible.

The river, indeed, severed me from a road which was level and safe; but my recent dangers were remembered only to make me shudder at the thought of incurring them a second time, by attempting to cross it. I blush at the recollection of this cowardice: it was little akin to the spirit which I had recently displayed; it was indeed an alien to my bosom,

bosom, and was quickly supplanted by intrepidity and perseverance.

I proceeded to mount the hill; from root to root, and from branch to branch, lay my journey: it was finished, and I sat down upon the highest brow to meditate on future trials. No road lay along this side of the river, which was rugged and sterile, and farms were sparingly dispersed over it: to reach one of these was now the object of my wishes. I had not lost the desire of reaching Solebury before morning; but my wet clothes, and the coldness of the night, seemed to have bereaved me of the power.

I traversed this summit, keeping the river on my right hand: happily, its declinations

declinations and ascents were by no means difficult; and I was cheered in the midst of my vexations, by observing that every mile brought me nearer to my uncle's dwelling. Meanwhile I anxiously looked for some tokens of a habitation: these at length presented themselves:—a wild heath, whistled over by October blasts, meagerly adorned with the dry stalks of scented shrubs, and the bald heads of the sapless mullen, was succeeded by a fenced field and a corn-stack: the dwelling to which these belonged was eagerly sought.

I was not surprised that all voices were still, and all lights extinguished; for this was the hour of repose. Having reached a piazza before the house, I paused:—whether, at this drowsy time,

to

to knock for admission, to alarm the peaceful tenants, and take from them the rest which their daily toils, and their rural innocence had made so sweet, or to retire to what shelter a haystack or barn could afford, was the theme of my deliberations.

Meanwhile I looked up at the house: it was the model of cleanliness and comfort: it was built of wood; but the materials had undergone the plane, as well as the axe and the saw: it was painted white; and the windows not only had sashes, but these sashes were supplied, contrary to custom, with glass: in most cases, the aperture where glass should be, is stuffed with an old hat or petticoat. The door had not only all its parts entire, but was embellished with mouldings and a pedi-

a pediment. I gathered from these tokens that this was the abode, not only of rural competence and innocence, but of some beings, raised by education and fortune above the intellectual mediocrity of clowns.

Methought I could claim consanguinity with such beings; not to share their charity and kindness, would be inflicting as well as receiving injury: the trouble of affording shelter and warmth and wholesome diet to a wretch destitute as I was, would be eagerly sought by them.

Still I was unwilling to disturb them. I bethought myself that their kitchen might be entered, and all that my necessities required, be obtained, without interrupting

rupting their slumber. I needed nothing but the warmth which their kitchen hearth would afford: stretched upon the bricks, I might dry my clothes, and perhaps enjoy some unmolested sleep; in spite of presages of ill, and the horrid remembrances of what I had performed and endured, I believed that Nature would afford a short respite to my cares.

I went to the door of what appeared to be a kitchen; the door was wide open. This circumstance portended evil; though it be not customary to lock or to bolt, it is still less usual to have entrances unclosed. I entered with suspicious steps, and saw enough to confirm my apprehensions. Several pieces of wood half-burned, lay in the midst of the floor: they appeared to have been removed

hither from the chimney, doubtless with a view to set fire to the whole building.

The fire had made some progress on the floor, but had been seasonably extinguished by pails full of water thrown upon it: the floor was still deluged with wet; the pail, not emptied of all its contents, stood upon the hearth. The earthen vessels and plates, whose proper place was the dresser, were scattered in fragments in all parts of the room. I looked around me for some one to explain this scene, but no one appeared.

The last spark of fire was put out, so that at that moment any further attempt at discovery seemed vain: still to retire from this scene, neither curiosity nor benevolence would permit. That

some mortal injury had been intended, was apparent: what greater mischief had befallen, or whether greater might not, by my interposition, be averted, could only be ascertained by penetrating further into the house. I opened a door on one side, which led to the main body of the building, and entered to a bedchamber: I stood at the entrance and knocked, but no one answered my signals.

The sky was not totally clouded, so that some light pervaded the room: I saw that a bed stood in the corner; but whether occupied or not, its curtains hindered me from judging. I stood in suspense a few minutes, when a motion in the bed shewed me that some one was there: I knocked again, but withdrew to the outside of the door. This roused the

sleeper; who, half-groaning and puffing the air through his nostrils, grumbled out in the hoarsest voice that I ever heard, and in a tone of surly impatience—"Who is there?"

I hesitated for an answer; but the voice instantly continued in the manner of one half asleep, and enraged at being disturbed—"Is it you, Peg? D—n ye, stay away, now—I tell ye, stay away, or, by God, I will cut your throat—I will——" He continued to mutter and swear, but without coherence or distinctness.

These were the accents of drunkenness, and denoted a wild and ruffian life; they were little in unison with the external appearances of the mansion, and blasted all the hopes I had formed of meeting

meeting under this roof with gentleness and hospitality. To talk with this being, to attempt to reason him into humanity and soberness, was useless: I was at a loss in what manner to address him, or whether it was proper to maintain any parley. Meanwhile, my silence was supplied by the suggestions of his own distempered fancy.—"Ay," said he, "ye will, will ye? Well, come on—let's see who's the better at the oak-stick: if I part with ye, before I have bared your bones—I'll teach ye to be always dipping in my dish, ye devil's dam, ye!"

So saying, he tumbled out of bed: at the first step he struck his head against the bedpost; but setting himself upright, he staggered towards the spot where I stood: some new obstacle occurred—he

stumbled and fell at his length upon the floor.

To encounter or expostulate with a man in this state, was plainly absurd: I turned and issued forth, with an aching heart, into the court before the house. The miseries which a debauched husband or father inflicts upon all whom their evil destiny allies to him, were pictured by my fancy, and wrung from me tears of anguish: these images, however, quickly yielded to reflections on my own state: no expedient now remained, but to seek the barn, and find a covering and a bed of straw.

I had scarcely set foot within the barn-yard when I heard a sound as of the crying of an infant: it appeared to issue

issue from the barn; I approached softly and listened at the door. The cries of the babe continued, but were accompanied by entreaties of a nurse or a mother to be quiet: these entreaties were mingled with heart-breaking sobs and exclamations of—"Ah, me! my babe, canst thou not sleep, and afford thy unhappy mother some peace? Thou art cold, and I have not sufficient warmth to cherish thee! What will become of us? Thy deluded father cares not if we both perish."

A glimpse of the true nature of the scene seemed to be imparted by these words. I now likewise recollected incidents that afforded additional light.—Somewhere on this bank of the river, there formerly resided one by name Selby;

he was an aged person, who united science and taste to the simple and laborious habits of a husbandman. He had a son, who resided several years in Europe; but on the death of his father, returned home, accompanied by a wife: he had succeeded to the occupation of the farm; but rumour had whispered many tales to the disadvantage of his morals. His wife was affirmed to be of delicate and polished manners, and much unlike her companion.

It now occurred to me that this was the dwelling of the Selbys, and I seemed to have gained some insight into the discord and domestic miseries by which the unhappy lady suffered. This was no time to waste my sympathy on others; I could benefit her nothing. Selby had probably

probably returned from a carousal, with all his malignant passions raised into frenzy by intoxication: he had driven his desolate wife from her bed and house; and, to shun outrage and violence, she had fled, with her helpless infant, to the barn. To appease his fury, to console her, to suggest a remedy for this distress, was not in my power: to have sought an interview, would be merely to excite her terrors and alarm her delicacy, without contributing to alleviate her calamity. Here then was no asylum for me: a place of rest must be sought at some neighbouring habitation; it was probable that one would be found at no great distance; the path that led from the spot where I stood, through a gate into a meadow, might conduct me to the nearest

dwelling; and this path I immediately resolved to explore.

I was anxious to open the gate without noise, but I could not succeed; some creaking of its hinges was unavoidably produced, which I feared would be overheard by the lady, and multiply her apprehensions and perplexities. This inconvenience was irremediable; I therefore closed the gate and pursued the foot-way before me with the utmost expedition. I had not gained the further end of the meadow when I lighted on something which lay asross the path, and which, on being closely inspected, appeared to be a human body: it was the corpse of a girl, mangled by a hatchet; her head, gory and deprived of its locks,

easily

easily explained the kind of enemies by whom she had been assailed. Here was proof that this quiet and remote habitation had been visited, in their destructive progress, by the Indians; the girl had been slain by them, and her scalp, according to their savage custom, had been torn away to be preserved as a trophy.

The fire which had been kindled on the kitchen floor was now remembered, and corroborated the inferences which were drawn from this spectacle. And yet that the mischief had been thus limited, that the besotted wretch who lay helpless on his bed, and careless of impending danger, and that the mother and her infant should escape, excited some degree of surprise. Could the savages have been interrupted in their work,

and obliged to leave their vengeance unfinished?

Their visit had been recent; many hours had not elapsed since they prowled about these grounds. Had they wholly disappeared, and meant they not to return? To what new danger might I be exposed in remaining thus guideless and destitute of all defence?

In consequence of these reflections, I proceeded with more caution; I looked with suspicious glances before and on either side of me. I now approached the fence which, on this side, bounded the meadow: something was discerned, or imagined, stretched close to the fence on the ground, and filling up the pathway. My apprehensions of a lurking enemy

enemy had been previously awakened, and my fancy instantly figured to itself an armed man, lying on the ground, and waiting to assail the unsuspecting passenger.

At first I was prompted to fly; but a second thought shewed me that I had already approached near enough to be endangered. Notwithstanding my pause, the form was motionless; the possibility of being misled in my conjectures was easily supposed: what I saw might be a log, or it might be another victim to savage ferocity. This tract was that which my safety required me to pursue; to turn aside, or go back, would be merely to bewilder myself anew.

Urged by these motives I went nearer, and

and at least was close enough to perceive that the figure was human: he lay upon his face; near his right hand was a musket, unclenched. This circumstance, his death-like attitude, and the garb and ornaments of an Indian, made me readily suspect the nature and cause of this catastrophe: here the invaders had been encountered and repulsed, and one, at least, of their number had been left upon the field.

I was weary of contemplating these rueful objects; custom, likewise, even in so short a period, had inured me to spectacles of horror—I was grown callous and immovable: I staid not to ponder on the scene; but snatching the musket, which was now without an owner, and which might be indispensible to my defence,

defence, I hastened into the wood. On this side the meadow was skirted by a forest, but a beaten road lead into it, and might therefore be attempted without danger.

CHAP. V.

THE road was intricate and long; it seemed designed to pervade the forest in every possible direction. I frequently noticed cut wood, piled in heaps upon either side, and rejoiced in these tokens that the residence of men was near. At length I reached a second fence, which proved to be the boundary of a road still more frequented; I pursued this, and presently beheld before me the river and its opposite barriers.

This

This object afforded me some knowledge of my situation. There was a ford over which travellers used to pass, and in which the road that I was now pursuing, terminated: the stream was rapid and tumultuous; but in this place it did not rise higher than the shoulders: on the opposite side was a highway, passable for horses and men, though not carriages, and which led into the midst of Solebury. Should I not rush into the stream, and still aim at reaching my uncle's house before morning? Why should I delay?

Thirty hours of incessant watchfulness and toil, of enormous efforts and perils, preceded and accompanied by abstinence and wounds, were enough to annihilate the strength and courage of ordinary men:

men: in the course of them, I had frequently believed myself to have reached the verge beyond which my force would not carry me; but experience as frequently demonstrated my error. Though many miles were yet to be traversed, though my clothes were once more to be drenched and loaded with moisture, though every hour seemed to add somewhat to the keenness of the blast; yet how should I know, but by trial, whether my stock of energy was not sufficient for this last exploit?

My resolution to proceed was nearly formed, when the figure of a man moving slowly across the road, at some distance before me, was observed. Hard by this ford lived a man by name Bisset, of whom I had slight knowledge: he

tended

tended his two hundred acres with a plodding and money-doting spirit, while his son overlooked a grist-mill on the river; he was a creature of gain, coarse and harmless: the man whom I saw might be he, or some one belonging to his family. Being armed for defence, I less scrupled a meeting with any thing in the shape of man; I therefore called. The figure stopped and answered me, without surliness or anger. The voice was unlike that of Bisset; but this person's information I believed would be of some service.

Coming up to him, he proved to be a clown, belonging to Bisset's habitation. His panic and surprise on seeing me made him aghast: in my present garb I should not have easily been recognised by

by my nearest kinsman, and much less easily by one who had seldom met me.

It may be easily conceived that my thoughts, when allowed to wander from the objects before me, were tormented with forebodings and inquietudes on account of the ills which I had so much reason to believe had befallen my family. I had no doubt that some evil had happened; but the full extent of it was still uncertain. I desired and dreaded to discover the truth, and was unable to interrogate this person in a direct manner; I could deal only in circuities and hints: I shuddered while I waited for an answer to my enquiries.

Had not Indians, I asked, been lately seen in this neighbourhood? Were they

they not suspected of hostile designs? Had they not already committed some mischief? Some passenger, perhaps, had been attacked; or fire had been set to some house? On which side of the river had their steps been observed, or any devastation been committed? Above the ford, or below it? At what distance from the river?

When his attention could be withdrawn from my person and bestowed upon my questions, he answered that some alarm had indeed been spread about Indians, and that parties from Solebury and Chetasco were out in pursuit of them—that many persons had been killed by them, and that one house in Solebury had been rifled and burned on the night before the last.

These tidings were a dreadful confirmation of my fears: there scarcely remained a doubt; but still my expiring hope prompted me to enquire to whom the house belonged.

He answered that he had not heard the name of the owner; he was a stranger to the people on the other side of the river.

"Were any of the inhabitants murdered?"

"Yes; all that were at home, except a girl whom they carried off: some say she has been retaken."

"What was the name?—Was it Huntly?"

"Huntly?

"Huntly?—Yes—no." He did not know—he had forgotten.

I fixed my eyes upon the ground—an interval of gloomy meditation succeeded: all was lost—all for whose sake I desired to live, had perished by the hands of these assassins; that dear home, the scene of my sportive childhood, of my studies, labours, and recreations, was ravaged by fire and the sword—was reduced to a frightful ruin.

Not only all that embellished and endeared existence was destroyed, but the means of subsistence itself. Thou knowest that my sisters and I were dependants on the bounty of our uncle: his death would make way for the succession of his son, a man fraught with envy and malignity,

malignity, who always testified a mortal hatred to us, merely because we enjoyed the protection of his father. The ground which furnished me with bread was now become the property of one who, if he could have done it with security, would gladly have mingled poison with my food.

All that my imagination or my heart regarded as of value had likewise perished; whatever my chamber, my closets, my cabinets contained, my furniture, my books, the records of my own skill, the monuments of their existence whom I loved, my very clothing, were involved in indiscriminate and irretrievable destruction. Why should I survive this calamity?

But

But did not he say that one had escaped? The only females in the family were my sisters: one of these had been reserved for a fate worse than death—to gratify the innate and insatiable cruelty of savages, by suffering all the torments their invention can suggest, or to linger out years of dreary bondage and uninterrmitted hardship in the bosom of the wilderness: to restore her to liberty, to cherish this last survivor of my unfortunate race, was a sufficient motive to life and to activity.

But soft! Had not rumour whispered that the captive was retaken? Oh! who was her angel of deliverance? Where did she now abide? Weeping over the untimely fall of her protector and her friend—lamenting and upbraiding the

absence of her brother? Why should I not haste to find her—to mingle my tears with hers, to assure her of my safety, and expiate the involuntary crime of my desertion, by devoting all futurity to the task of her consolation and improvement?

The path was open and direct. My new motives would have trampled upon every impediment, and made me reckless of all dangers and all toils. I broke from my reverie; and without taking leave, or expressing gratitude to my informant, I ran with frantic expedition towards the river, and plunging into it, gained the opposite side in a moment.

I was sufficiently acquainted with the road: some twelve or fifteen miles remained

remained to be traversed. I did not fear that my strength would fail in the performance of my journey: it was not my uncle's habitation to which I directed my steps. Inglefield was my friend; if my sister had existence, or was snatched from captivity, it was here that an asylum had been afforded to her, and here was I to seek the knowledge of my destiny: for this reason, having reached a spot where the road divided into two branches, one of which led to Inglefield's and the other to Huntly's, I struck into the former.

Scarcely had I passed the angle, when I noticed a building on the right hand, at some distance from the road. In the present state of my thoughts it would not have attracted my attention, had not

a light gleamed from an upper window, and told me that all within were not at rest.

I was acquainted with the owner of this mansion: he merited esteem and confidence, and could not fail to be informed of recent events. From him I should obtain all the information that I needed, and I should be delivered from some part of the agonies of my suspense; I should reach his door in a few minutes, and the window-light was a proof that my entrance at this hour would not disturb the family, some of whom were stirring.

Through a gate, I entered an avenue of tall oaks, that led to the house. I could not but reflect on the effect which my

my appearance would produce upon the family.—The sleek locks, neat apparel, pacific guise, sobriety and gentleness of aspect by which I was customarily distinguished, would in vain be sought in the apparition which would now present itself before them: my legs, neck, and bosom were bare, and their native hue was exchanged for the livid marks of bruises and scarifications; a horrid scar upon my cheek, and my uncombed locks, hollow eyes, made ghastly by abstinence and cold, and the ruthless passions of which my mind had been the theatre, added to the musket which I carried in my hand, would prepossess them with the notion of a maniac or ruffian.

Some inconveniences might hence arise; which, however, could not be avoided: I must trust to the speed with which my voice and my words should disclose my true character and rectify their mistake.

I now reached the principal door of the house: it was open, and I unceremoniously entered. In the midst of the room stood a German stove, well heated. To thaw my half-frozen limbs was my first care: meanwhile I gazed around me, and marked the appearances of things.

Two lighted candles stood upon the table; beside them were cyder-bottles and pipes of tobacco. The furniture and room was in that state which denoted

it

it to have been lately filled with drinkers and smokers; yet neither voice, nor visage, nor motion, was any where observable: I listened; but neither above nor below, within nor without, could any tokens of a human being be perceived.

This vacancy and silence must have been lately preceded by noise, concourse, and bustle. The contrast was mysterious and ambiguous: no adequate cause of so quick and absolute a transition occurred to me. Having gained some warmth, and lingered some ten or twenty minutes in this uncertainty, I determined to explore the other apartments of the building: I knew not what might betide in my absence, or what I might encounter in my search to justify precaution, and therefore kept the gun

in my hand. I snatched a candle from the table, and proceeded into two other apartments on the first floor and the kitchen: neither was inhabited, though chairs and tables were arranged in their usual order, and no traces of violence or hurry were apparent.

Having gained the foot of the staircase, I knocked; but my knocking was wholly disregarded. A light had appeared in an upper chamber: it was not, indeed, in one of those apartments which the family permanently occupied, but in that which, according to rural custom, was reserved for guests; but it indubitably betokened the presence of some being by whom my doubts might be solved: these doubts were too tormenting to allow of scruples and delay—I mounted the stairs.

At

At each chamber door I knocked; but I knocked in vain: I tried to open, but found them to be locked. I at length reached the entrance of that in which a light had been discovered: here it was certain that some one would be found; but here, as well as elsewhere, my knocking was unnoticed.

To enter this chamber was audacious; but no other expedient was afforded me to determine whether the house had any inhabitants: I therefore entered, though with caution and reluctance. No one was within; but there were sufficient traces of some person who had lately been here. On the table stood a travelling escritoir, open, with pens and inkstand: a chair was placed before it, and a candle on the right hand. Such an apparatus was

rarely seen in this country: some traveller it seemed occupied this room, though the rest of the mansion was deserted. The pilgrim, as these appearances testified, was of no vulgar order, and belonged not to the class of periodical and every-day guests.

It now occurred to me that the occupant of this apartment could not be far off, and that some danger and embarrassment could not fail to accrue from being found, thus accoutred and garbed, in a place sacred to the study and repose of another: it was proper, therefore, to withdraw, and either to resume my journey, or wait for the stranger's return, whom perhaps some temporary engagement had called away in the lower and public room. The former now appeared

to

to be the best expedient, as the return of this unknown person was uncertain, as well as his power to communicate the information which I wanted.

Had paper, as well as the implements of writing, lain upon the desk, perhaps my lawless curiosity would not have scrupled to have pried into it: on the first glance, nothing of that kind appeared; but now, as I turned towards the door, somewhat lying beside the desk, on the side opposite the candle, caught my attention. The impulse was instantaneous and mechanical that made me leap to the spot and lay my hand upon it: till I felt it between my fingers, till I brought it near my eyes, and read frequently the inscriptions that appeared upon it, I was

doubtful whether my senses had deceived me.

Few perhaps among mankind have undergone vicissitudes of peril and wonder equal to mine. The miracles of poetry, the transitions of enchantment, are beggarly and mean, compared with those which I had experienced: passage into new forms, overleaping the bars of time and space, reversal of the laws of inanimate and intelligent existence, had been mine to perform and to witness.

No event had been more fertile of sorrow and perplexity than the loss of thy brother's letters: they went by means invisible, and disappeared at a moment when foresight would have least predicted their

their disappearance. They now placed themselves before me in a manner equally abrupt, in a place and by means no less contrary to expectation. The papers which I now seized were those letters: the parchment cover, the string that tied, and the wax that sealed them, appeared not to have been opened or violated.

The power that removed them from my cabinet, and dropped them in this house—a house which I rarely visited, which I had not entered during the last year, with whose inhabitants I maintained no cordial intercourse, and to whom my occupations and amusements, my joys and my sorrows, were unknown, was no object even of conjecture: but they were not possessed by any of the family;

family; some stranger was here, by whom they had been stolen, or into whose possession they had, by some incomprehensible chance, fallen.

That stranger was near: he had left this apartment for a moment—he would speedily return. To go hence, might possibly occasion me to miss him: here then I would wait, till he should grant me an interview. The papers were mine, and were recovered: I would never part with them; but to know by whose force, or by whose stratagems I had been bereaved of them thus long, was now the supreme passion of my soul. I seated myself near a table, and anxiously awaited for an interview, on which I was irresistibly persuaded to believe that much of my happiness depended.

Meanwhile,

Meanwhile, I could not but connect this incident with the destruction of my family. The loss of these papers had excited transports of grief; and yet to have lost them thus, was perhaps the sole expedient by which their final preservation could be rendered possible: had they remained in my cabinet, they could not have escaped the destiny which overtook the house and its furniture. Savages are not accustomed to leave their exterminating work unfinished: the house which they have plundered, they are careful to level with the ground; this, not only their revenge, but their caution prescribes: fire may originate by accident as well as by design, and the traces of pillage and murder are totally obliterated by the flames.

These

These thoughts were interrupted by the shutting of a door below, and by footsteps ascending the stairs. My heart throbbed at the sound: my seat became uneasy, and I started on my feet; I even advanced half way to the entrance of the room: my eyes were intensely fixed upon the door. My impatience would have made me guess at the person of this visitant by measuring his shadow, if his shadow were first seen; but this was precluded by the position of the light: it was only when the figure entered, and the whole person was seen, that my curiosity was gratified—He who stood before me was the parent and fosterer of my mind, the companion and instructor of my youth, from whom I had been parted for years, from whom I

believed myself to be for ever separated—*Sarsefield* himself!

CHAP. VI.

My deportment at an interview so much desired, and so wholly unforeseen, was that of a maniac. The petrifying influence of surprise yielded to the impetuosities of passion; I held him in my arms—I wept upon his bosom—I sobbed with emotion, which, had it not found passage at my eyes, would have burst my

my heartstrings. Thus it should seem as if I, who had escaped the deaths that had previously assailed me in so many forms, were to be reserved to solemnize a scene like this, by—*dying for joy!*

The sterner passions and habitual austerities of my companion exempted him from pouring out this testimony of his feelings: his feelings were indeed more allied to astonishment and incredulity than mine had been. My person was not instantly recognised: he shrunk from my embrace, as if I were an apparition or impostor; he quickly disengaged himself from my arms, and, withdrawing a few paces, gazed upon me as on one whom he had never before seen.

These

These repulses were ascribed to the loss of his affection: I was not mindful of the hideous guise in which I stood before him, and by which he might justly be misled to imagine me a ruffian or a lunatic. My tears flowed now on a new account; and I articulated, in a broken and faint voice—"My master! my friend! have you forgotten, have you ceased to love me?"

The sound of my voice made him start, and exclaim—"Am I alive?—am I awake? Speak again, I beseech you, and convince me that I am not dreaming, or delirious!"

"Can you need any proof," I answered, "that it is Edgar Huntly—your

your pupil, your child, that speaks to you?"

He now withdrew his eyes from me, and fixed them on the floor. After a pause, he resumed, in emphatic accents — "Well, I have lived to this age in unbelief! To credit or trust in miraculous agency, was foreign to my nature; but now I am no longer sceptical: call me to any bar, and exact from me an oath that you have twice been dead, and twice recalled to life—that you move about invisibly, and change your place by the force, not of muscles, but of thought, and I will give it.

"How came you hither? Did you penetrate

penetrate the wall? Did you rise through the floor?

"Yet surely 'tis an error—you cannot be he whom twenty witnesses affirmed to have beheld a lifeless and mangled corpse upon the ground, whom my own eyes saw in that condition!

"In seeking the spot once more to provide you a grave, you had vanished: again I met you; you plunged into a rapid stream from a height from which it was impossible to fall and to live; yet, as if to set the limits of Nature at defiance, to sport with human penetration, you rose upon the surface—you floated—you swam. Thirty bullets were aimed at your head by marksmen celebrated for the exactness of their sight: I myself

was

was of the number, and I never missed what I desired to hit.

"My predictions were confirmed by the event: you ceased to struggle—you sunk, to rise no more; and yet, after these accumulated deaths, you light upon this floor, so far distant from the scene of your catastrophe, over spaces only to be passed in so short a time as has since elapsed, by those who have wings.

"My eyes, my ears bear testimony to your existence now, as they formerly convinced me of your death. What am I to think? What proofs am I to credit?"

There he stopped.

Every

Every accent of this speech added to the confusion of my thoughts. The allusions that my friend had made were not unintelligible.—I gained a glimpse of the complicated errors by which we had been mutually deceived.—I had fainted on the area before Deb's hut: I was found by Sarsefield in this condition, and imagined to be dead.

The man whom I had seen upon the promontory was not an Indian: he belonged to a numerous band of pursuers, whom my hostile and precipitate deportment caused to suspect me for an enemy. They that fired from the steep were friends. The interposition that screened me from so many bullets was indeed miraculous. No wonder that my voluntary sinking, in order to elude their shots, was mistaken

taken for death; and that, having accomplished the destruction of this foe, they resumed their pursuit of others. But how was Sarsefield apprized that it was I who plunged into the river? No subsequent event was possible to impart to him the incredible truth.

A pause of mutual silence ensued. At length Sarsefield renewed his expressions of amazement at this interview, and besought me to explain why I had disappeared by night from my uncle's house, and by what series of unheard-of events this interview was brought about. Was it indeed Huntly whom he examined and mourned over at the threshold of Deb's hut—whom he had sought in every thicket and cave in the ample circuit of Norwalk and Chetasco—whom he

he had seen perish in the current of the Delaware?

Instead of noticing his questions, my soul was harrowed with anxiety respecting the fate of my uncle and sisters. Sarsefield could communicate the tidings which would decide on my future lot, and set my portion in happiness or misery: yet I had not breath to speak my enquiries; hope tottered, and I felt as if a single word would be sufficient for its utter subversion: at length I articulated the name of my uncle.

The single word sufficiently imparted my fears, and these fears needed no verbal confirmation: at that dear name, my companion's features were overspread by sorrow.

"Your uncle," said he, "is dead."

"Dead! Merciful Heaven! And sisters too?—both?"

"Your sisters are alive and well."

"Nay," resumed I, in faltering accents, "jest not with my feelings; be not cruel in your pity—tell me the truth."

"I have said the truth: they are well at Mr. Inglefield's."

My wishes were eager to assent to the truth of these tidings. The better part of me was then safe: but how did they escape the fate that overtook my uncle?—how did they evade the destroying hatchet

and

and the midnight conflagration? These doubts were imparted in a tumultuous and obscure manner to my friend: he no sooner fully comprehended them, than he looked at me with some inquietude and surprise.

"Huntly," said he, "are you mad? What has filled you with these hideous prepossessions? Much havoc has indeed been committed in Chetasco and the wilderness, and a log hut has been burned by design or by accident in Solebury, but that is all: your house has not been assailed by either firebrand or tomahawk; every thing is safe, and in its ancient order. The master indeed is gone; but the old man fell a victim to his own temerity and hardihood. It is thirty years since he retired with three wounds from

the field of Braddock; but time in no degree abated his adventurous and military spirit. On the first alarm, he summoned his neighbours, and led them in pursuit of the invaders: alas! he was the first to attack them, and the only one who fell in the contest!"

These words were uttered in a manner that left me no room to doubt of their truth. My uncle had already been lamented, and the discovery of the nature of his death, so contrary to my forebodings, and of the safety of my girls, made the state of my mind partake more of exultation and joy than of grief or regret.

But how was I deceived! Had not my fusee been found in the hands of an enemy?

enemy? Whence could he have plundered it but from my own chamber? It hung against the wall of a closet, from which no stranger could have taken it except by violence. My perplexities and doubts were not at an end; but those which constituted my chief torment were removed. I listened to my friend's entreaties to tell him the cause of my elopement, and the incidents that terminated in the present interview.

I began with relating my return to consciousness in the bottom of the pit—my efforts to free myself from this abhorred prison—the acts of horror to which I was impelled by famine, and their excruciating consequences—my gaining the outlet of the cavern—the desperate expe-

dient by which I removed the impediment to my escape, and the deliverance of the captive girl—the contest I maintained before Deb's hut—my subsequent wanderings—the banquet which hospitality afforded me—my journey to the river-bank—my meditations on the means of reaching the road—my motives for hazarding my life, by plunging into the stream—and my subsequent perils and fears till I reached the threshold of this habitation.

"Thus," continued I, "I have complied with your request; I have told all that I myself know. What were the incidents between my sinking to rest at Inglefield's, and my awaking in the chambers of the hill—by what means and by whose

whose contrivance, preternatural or human, this transition was effected, I am unable to explain—I cannot even guess.

"What has eluded my sagacity may not be beyond the reach of another: your own reflections on my tale, or some facts that have fallen under your notice, may enable you to furnish a solution. But, meanwhile, how am I to account for your appearance on this spot? This meeting was unexpected and abrupt to you; but it has not been less so to me: of all mankind, Sarsefield was the farthest from my thoughts when I saw these tokens of a traveller and a stranger.

"You were imperfectly acquainted with my wanderings:—you saw me on the

ground before Deb's hut—you saw me plunge into the river—you endeavoured to destroy me while swimming—and you knew, before my narrative was heard, that Huntly was the object of your enmity. What was the motive of your search in the desert, and how were you apprized of my condition? These things are not less wonderful that any of those which I have already related."

During my tale the features of Sarsefield betokened the deepest attention: his eye strayed not a moment from my face. All my perils and forebodings were fresh in my remembrance they had scarcely gone by—their skirts, so to speak, were still visible. No wonder that my eloquence was vivid and pathetic

—that

—that I portrayed the past as if it were the present scene, and that not my tongue only, but every muscle and limb spoke.

When I had finished my relation, Sarsefield sunk into thoughtfulness: from this, after a time, he recovered, and said —"Your tale, Huntly, is true; yet, did I not see you before me, were I not acquainted with the artlessness and rectitude of your character, and, above all, had not my own experience during the last three days confirmed every incident, I should question its truth. You have amply gratified my curiosity, and deserve that your own should be gratified as fully.—Listen to me.

"Much has happened since we parted, which shall not be now mentioned. I promised to inform you of my welfare by letter, and did not fail to write; but whether my letters were received, or any were written by you in return, or if written, were ever transmitted, I cannot tell; none were ever received.

"Some days since I arrived, in company with a lady who is my wife, in America. You have never been forgotten by me: I knew your situation to be little in agreement with your wishes; and one of the benefits which Fortune has lately conferred upon me, is the power of snatching you from a life of labour and obscurity, whose goods, scanty as they are, are transient and precarious; and

affording you the suitable leisure and means of intellectual gratification and improvement.

"Your silence made me entertain some doubts concerning your welfare, and even your existence: to solve these doubts, I hastened to Solebury. Some delays upon the road, hindered me from accomplishing my journey by day-light: it was night before I entered the Norwalk path; but my ancient rambles with you made me familiar with it, and I was not afraid of being obstructed or bewildered.

"Just as I gained the southern outlet, I spied a passenger on foot coming towards me with a quick pace: the incident was of no moment, and yet the

time of night, the seeming expedition of the walker, recollection of the mazes and obstacles which he was going to encounter, and a vague conjecture that, perhaps, he was unacquainted with the difficulties that awaited him, made me eye him with attention as he passed.

" He came near, and I thought I recognised a friend in this traveller: the form, the gesture, the stature, bore a powerful resemblance to those of Edgar Huntly: this resemblance was so strong, that I stopped, and after he had gone by, called him by your name. That no notice was taken of my call proved that the person was mistaken; but even though it were another, that he should not even hesitate or turn at a summons which he could not but perceive to be addressed, though

though erroneously, to him, was the source of some surprise: I did not repeat my call, but proceeded on my way.

"All had retired to repose in your uncle's dwelling: I did not scruple to rouse them, and was received with affectionate and joyous greetings. That you allowed your uncle to rise before you, was a new topic of reflection. To my enquiries concerning you, answers were made that accorded with my wishes: I was told that you were in good health and were then abed. That you had not heard and risen at my knocking, was mentioned with surprise; but your uncle accounted for your indolence by saying that, during the last week, you had fatigued yourself by rambling night and day, in search of some maniac or visionary, who

who was supposed to have retreated into Norwalk.

"I insisted upon awakening you myself:—I anticipated the effect of this sudden and unlooked-for meeting with some emotions of pride as well as of pleasure; to find, on opening your eyes, your old preceptor standing by your bedside and gazing in your face, would place you, I conceived, in an affecting situation.

"Your chamber door was open, but your bed was empty. Your uncle and sisters were made acquainted with this circumstance: their surprise gave way to conjectures that your restless and romantic spirit had tempted you from your repose, that you had rambled abroad on some fantastic errand, and would probably

bably return before the dawn. I willingly acquiesced in this opinion; and my feelings being too thoroughly aroused to allow me to sleep, I took possession of your chamber, and patiently awaited your return.

"The morning returned, but Huntly made not his appearance. Your uncle became somewhat uneasy at this unseasonable absence. Much speculation and enquiry as to the possible reasons of your flight, were made. In my survey of your chamber, I noted that only part of your clothing remained beside your bed: coat, hat, stockings, and shoes lay upon the spot where they had probably been thrown when you had disrobed yourself; but the pantaloons, which, according to Mr. Huntly's report, completed your dress,

dress, were no where to be found. That you should go forth on so cold a night so slenderly appareled, was almost incredible: your reason or your senses had deserted you, before so rash an action could be meditated.

"I now remembered the person I had met in Norwalk: his resemblance to your figure, his garb, which wanted hat, coat, stockings, and shoes, and your absence from your bed at that hour, were remarkable coincidences. But why did you disregard my call? Your name uttered by a voice that could not be unknown, was surely sufficient to arrest your steps.

"Each hour added to the impatience of your friends: to their recollections and

and conjectures I listened with a view to extract from them some solution of this mystery. At length a story was alluded to, of some one who, on the preceding night, had been heard walking in the long room; to this was added the tale of your anxieties and wonders occasioned by the loss of certain manuscripts.

" While ruminating upon these incidents, and endeavouring to extract from this intelligence a clue explanatory of your present situation, a single word, casually dropped by your uncle, instantly illuminated my darkness and dispelled my doubts.—' After all,' said the old man, ' ten to one but Edgar himself was the man whom we heard walking: but

but the lad was asleep, and knew not what he was about.'

'Surely,' said I, 'this inference is just; his manuscripts could not be removed by any hands but his own, since the rest of mankind were unacquainted, not only with the place of their concealment, but with their existence. None but a man insane or asleep would wander forth so slightly dressed; and none but a sleeper would have disregarded my calls.'—This conclusion was generally adopted; but it gave birth in my mind to infinite inquietudes. You had roved into Norwalk, a scene of inequalities, of prominences and pits, among which, thus destitute of the guidance of your senses, you could scarcely fail to be destroyed,

or, at least, irretrievably bewildered. I painted to myself the dangers to which you were subjected: your careless feet would bear you into some whirlpool, or to the edge of some precipice; some internal revolution or outward shock would recall you to consciousness at some perilous moment: surprise and fear would disable you from taking seasonable or suitable precautions, and your destruction be made sure.

"The lapse of every new hour, without bringing tidings of your state, enhanced these fears. At length the propriety of searching for you occurred: Mr. Huntly and I determined to set out upon this pursuit, as well as to commission others. A plan was laid by which every accessible part of Norwalk, the wilderness

wilderness beyond the flats of Solebury, and the valley of Chetasco, should be traversed and explored.

"Scarcely had we equipped ourselves for this expedition, when a messenger arrived, who brought the disastrous news of Indians being seen within these precincts; and on the last night a farmer was shot in his fields—a dwelling in Chetasco was burned to the ground, and its inhabitants murdered or made captives. Rumour and enquiry had been busy, and a plausible conjecture had been formed as to the course and number of the enemies: they were said to be divided into bands, and to amount in the whole to thirty or forty warriors. This messenger had come to warn us of danger which might impend, and to summon us to join in

in the pursuit and extirpation of these detestable foes.

"Your uncle, whose alacrity and vigour age had not abated, eagerly engaged in this scheme. I was not averse to contribute my efforts to an end like this: the road which we had previously designed to take in search of my fugitive pupil, was the same by which we must trace or intercept the retreat of the savages: thus two purposes, equally momentous, would be answered by the same means.

"Mr. Huntly armed himself with your fusee—Inglefield supplied me with a gun: during our absence the dwelling was closed and locked, and your sisters placed under the protection of Inglefield,

whose

whose age and pacific sentiments unfitted him for arduous and sanguinary enterprises. A troop of rustics was collected, half of whom remained to traverse Solebury, and the other, whom Mr. Huntly and I accompanied, hastened to Chetasco.

CHAP. VII.

"IT was noonday before we reached the theatre of action: fear and revenge combined to make the people of Chetasco diligent and zealous in their own defence. The havoc already committed had been mournful; to prevent a repetition of the same calamities, they resolved to hunt out the hostile footsteps, and exact a merciless retribution.

"It was likely that the enemy, on the approach

approach of day, had withdrawn from the valley, and concealed themselves in the thickets between the parrallel ridges of the mountain. This space, which, according to the object with which it is compared, is either a vale or the top of a hill, was obscure and desolate: it was undoubtedly the avenue by which the robbers had issued forth, and by which they would escape to the Ohio: here they might still remain, intending to emerge from their concealment on the next night, and perpetrate new horrors.

"A certain distribution was made of our number, so as to move in all directions at the same time. I will not dwell upon particulars—it will suffice to say, that keen eyes and indefatigable feet brought us at last to the presence of the largest

largest number of these marauders.—Seven of them were slain by the edge of a brook, where they sat wholly unconscious of the danger which hung over them; five escaped, and one of these secured his retreat by wresting your fusee from your uncle, and shooting him dead: before our companion could be rescued or revenged, the assassin, with the remnant of the troop, disappeared, and bore away with him the fusee as a trophy of his victory.

"This disaster was deplored, not only on account of that life which had thus been sacrificed, but because a sagacious guide and intrepid leader was lost. His acquaintance with the habits of the Indians, and his experience in their wars,

made him trace their footsteps with more certainty than any of his associates.

"The pursuit was still continued, and parties were so stationed, that the escape of the enemy was difficult, if not impossible: our search was unremitted; but during twelve or fourteen hours, unsuccessful. Queen Mab did not escape all suspicion: her hut was visited by different parties; but the old woman and her dogs had disappeared.

"Meanwhile, your situation was not forgotten: every one was charged to explore your footsteps as well as those of the savages; but this search was no less unsuccessful than the former—none had heard of you or seen you.

"This

"This continued till midnight. Three of us made a pause at a brook, and intended to repair our fatigues by a respite of a few hours; but scarcely had we stretched ourselves on the ground when we were alarmed by a shot, which seemed to have been fired at a short distance. We started on our feet, and consulted with each other on the measures to be taken. A second, a third, and a fourth shot, from the same quarter, excited our attention anew. Mab's hut was known to stand at the distance and in the direction of this sound, and hither we resolved to repair.

"This was done with speed, but with the utmost circumspection. We shortly reached the road that leads near this hut, and at length gained a view of the build-

ing. Many persons were discovered in a sort of bustling inactivity before the hut: they were easily distinguished to be friends, and were therefore approached without scruple.

"The objects that presented themselves, on a nearer view, were five bodies stretched upon the ground: three of them were savages; the fourth was a girl, who, though alive, seemed to have received a mortal wound; the fifth, breathless and mangled, and his features almost concealed by the blood that overspread his face, was Edgar, the fugitive for whom I had made such anxious search.

"About the same hour on the last night I had met you hasting into Norwalk;

walk; now were you lying in the midst of savages, at the distance of thirty miles from your home, and in a spot which it was impossible for you to have reached, unless by an immense circuit over rocks and thickets. That you had found a rift at the basis of the hill, and thus permeated its solidities, and precluded so tedious and circuitous a journey as must otherwise have been made, was not to be imagined.

"But whence arose this scene? It was obvious to conclude that my associates had surprised their enemies in this house, and exacted from them the forfeit of their crimes; but how you should have been confounded with their foes, or whence came the wounded girl, was a subject of astonishment.

"You will judge how much this surprise was augmented when I was informed that the party whom we found, had been attracted hither by the same signals by which we had been alarmed; that on reaching this spot you had been discovered alive, seated on the ground, and still sustaining the gun with which you had apparently completed the destruction of so many adversaries: in a moment after their arrival, you sunk down and expired.

"This scene was attended with inexplicable circumstances: the musket which lay beside you appeared to have belonged to one of the savages; the wound by which each had died was single. Of the four shots we had distinguished at a distance, three of them were

therefore

therefore fatal to the Indians, and the fourth was doubtless that by which you had fallen; yet three muskets only were discoverable.

"The arms were collected; and the girl was carried to the nearest house by her father. Her situation was deemed capable of remedy; and the sorrow and wonder which I felt at your untimely and extraordinary fate, did not hinder me from endeavouring to r store the health of this unfortunate victim: I reflected likewise that some light might be thrown upon transactions so mysterious, by the information which might be collected from her story. Numberless questions and hints were necessary to extract from her a consistent or intelligent tale. She had been dragged, it

seems, for miles at the heels of her conquerors, who at length stopped in a cavern for the sake of some repose. All slept but one, who sat and watched: something called him away; and, at the same moment, you appeared at the bottom of the cave, half naked and without arms: you instantly supplied the last deficiency by seizing the gun and tomahawk of him who had gone forth, and who had negligently left his weapons behind: then stepping over the bodies of the sleepers, you rushed out of the cavern.

"She then mentioned your unexpected return, her deliverance and flight, and arrival at Deb's hut. You watched upon the hearth, and she fell asleep upon the blanket: from this sleep she was aroused by

by violent and cruel blows. She looked up—you were gone, and the bed on which she lay was surrounded by the men from whom she had so lately escaped. One dragged her out of the hut, and levelled his gun at her breast: at the moment when he touched the trigger, a shot came from an unknown quarter, and he fell at her feet. Of subsequent events she had an incoherent recollection: the Indians were successively slain, and you came to her, and interrogated and consoled her.

"In your journey to the hut you were armed: this in some degree accounted for appearances—but where were your arms? Three muskets only were discovered, and these undoubtedly belonged to your enemies.

"I now had leisure to reflect upon your destiny. I had arrived soon enough on this shore merely to witness the catastrophe of two beings whom I most loved: both were overtaken by the same fate, nearly at the same hour; the same hand had possibly accomplished the destruction of uncle and nephew.

"Now, however, I began to entertain a hope that your state might not be irretrievable. You had walked and spoken after the firing was over and your enemies had ceased to contend with you. A wound had no doubt been previously received: I had hastily inferred that the wound was mortal, and that life could not be recalled. Occupied with attention to the wailings of the girl, and full of sorrow and perplexity, I had admitted an opinion

opinion which would have never been adopted in different circumstances. My acquaintance with wounds would have taught me to regard sunken muscles, lividness, and cessation of the pulse, as mere indications of a swoon, and not as tokens of death.

"Perhaps my error was not irreparable: by hastening to the hut, I might ascertain your condition, and at least transport your remains to some dwelling, and finally secure to you the decencies of burial.

"Of twelve savages discovered on the preceding day, ten were now killed: two at least remained, after whom the pursuit was still zealously maintained. Attention to the wounded girl had withdrawn me

from the party, and I had now leisure to return to the scene of these disasters: the sun had risen, and, accompanied by two others, I repaired thither.

"A sharp turn in the road, at the entrance of the field, set before us a starting spectacle. An Indian, mangled by repeated wounds of bayonet and bullet, was discovered: his musket was stuck in the ground, by way of beacon attracting our attention to the spot. Over this space I had gone a few hours before, and nothing like this was then seen: the parties abroad had hied away to a distant quarter. Some invisible power seemed to be enlisted in our defence, and to preclude the necessity of our arms.

"We

"We proceeded to the hut: the savages were there; but Edgar had risen and flown! Nothing now seemed to be incredible. You had slain three foes, and the weapon with which the victory had been achieved, had vanished; you had risen from the dead, had assailed one of the surviving enemies, had employed bullet and dagger in his destruction, with both of which you could only be supplied by supernatural means, and had disappeared. If any inhabitant of Chetasco had done this, we should have heard of it.

"But what remained? You were still alive: your strength was sufficient to bear you from this spot. Why were you still invisible, and to what dangers might you not be exposed before you could extricate

extricate yourself from the mazes of this wilderness?

"Once more I procured indefatigable search to be made after you: it was continued till the approach of evening, and was fruitless. Enquiries were twice made at the house where you were supplied with food and intelligence:—on the second call I was astonished and delighted by the tidings received from the good woman: your person and demeanour and arms were described, and mention made of your resolution to cross the southern ridge, and traverse the Solebury road with the utmost expedition.

"The greater part of my inquietudes were now removed: you were able to eat and to travel, and there was little doubt that

that a meeting would take place between us on the next morning; meanwhile, I determined to concur with those who pursued the remainder of the enemy. I followed you in the path that you were said to have taken, and quickly joined a numerous party who were searching for those who on the last night had attacked a plantation that lies near this, and destroyed the inhabitants.

"I need not dwell upon our doublings and circuities. The enemy was traced to the house of Selby: they had entered; they had put fire on the floor, but were compelled to relinquish their prey. Of what number they consisted, could not be ascertained; but one, lingering behind his fellows, was shot at the entrance

of the wood, and on the spot where you chanced to light upon him.

"Selby's house was empty, and before the fire had made any progress, we extinguished it. The drunken wretch whom you encountered, had probably returned from his nocturnal debauch after we had left the spot.

"The flying enemy was pursued with fresh diligence: they were found, by various tokens, to have crossed the river, and to have ascended the mountain. We trod closely on their heels. When we arrived at the promontory described by you, the fatigues of the night and day rendered me unqualified to proceed: I determined that this should be the bound

of

of my excursions. I was anxious to obtain an interview with you; and unless I paused here, should not be able to gain Inglefield's as early in the morning as I wished. Two others concurred with me in this resolution; and we prepared to return to this house, which had been deserted by its tenants till the danger was past, and which had been selected as the place of rendezvous.

"At this moment, dejected and weary, I approached the ledge which severed the headland from the mountain. I marked the appearance of some one stretched upon the ground where you lay. No domestic animal would wander hither, and place himself upon this spot: there was something likewise in the appearance of the object that bespoke it to be man; but

but if it were man, it was incontrovertibly a savage and a foe: I determined, therefore, to rouse you by a bullet.

"My decision was perhaps absurd; I ought to have gained more certainty before I hazarded your destruction: be that as it will, a moment's lingering on your part would have probably been fatal. You started on your feet, and fired. See the hole which your random shot made through my sleeve! This surely was a day destined to be signalized by hair-breadth escapes.

"Your action seemed incontestibly to confirm my prognostics. Every one hurried to the spot, and was eager to destroy an enemy: no one hesitated to believe that some of the shots aimed at you had reached

reached their mark, and that you had sunk to rise no more.

"The gun which was fired and thrown down, was taken and examined; it had been my companion in many a toilsome expedition—it had rescued me and my friends from a thousand deaths; in order to recognise it, I needed only to touch and handle it: I instantly discovered that I held in my hand the fusee which I had left with you on parting, with which your uncle had equipped himself, and which had been ravished from him by a savage. What was I hence to infer respecting the person of the last possessor?

"My enquiries respecting you of the woman whose milk and bread you had eaten, were minute. You entered, she said,

said, with a hatchet and gun in your hand. While you eat, the gun was laid upon the table: she sat near, and the piece became the object of inquisitive attention. The stock and barrels were described by her in such terms as left no doubt that this was the *fusee*.

"A comparison of incidents enabled me to trace the manner in which you came into possession of this instrument:—one of those whom you found in the cavern, was the assassin of your uncle; according to the girl's report, on issuing from your hiding-place, you seized a gun that was unoccupied, and this gun chanced to be your own.

"Its two barrels were probably the cause of your success in that unequal contest

contest at Mab's hut. On recovering from *deliquium*, you found it where it had been dropped by you, out of sight, and unsuspected by the party that had afterwards arrived. In your passage to the river, had it once more fallen into hostile hands; or had you missed the way, wandered to this promontory, and mistaken a troop of friends for a band of Indian marauders?

"Either supposition was dreadful: the latter was the most plausible. No motives were conceivable by which one of the fugitives could be induced to post himself here in this conspicuous station: whereas, the road which lead you to the summit of the hill, to that spot where descent to the river road was practicable, could not be found but by those who were

were accustomed to traverse it. The directions which you had exacted from your hostess, proved your previous unacquaintance with these tracts.

" I acquiesced in this opinion with a heavy and desponding heart. Fate had led us into a maze, which could only terminate in the destruction of one or of the other. By the breadth of a hair had I escaped death from your hand: the same fortune had not befriended you. After my tedious search, I had lighted on you, forlorn, bewildered, perishing with cold and hunger: instead of recognising and affording you relief, I compelled you to leap into the river from a perilous height, and had desisted from my persecution only when I had bereaved you

you of life, and plunged you to the bottom of the gulf.

" My motives in coming to America were numerous and mixed: among these was the parental affection with which you had inspired me. I came with fortune, and a better gift than fortune in my hand; I intended to bestow both upon you, not only to give you competence, but one who would endear to you that competence, who would enhance, by participating, every gratification.

" My schemes were now at an end; you were gone beyond the reach of my benevolence and justice. I had robbed your two sisters of a friend and guardian: it was some consolation to think that it was in my power to stand, with regard

regard to them, in your place—that I could snatch them from the poverty, dependence, and humiliation, to which your death and that of your uncle had reduced them.

"I was now doubly weary of the enterprise in which I was engaged, and returned with speed to this rendezvous. My companions have gone to know the state of the family who resided under this roof, and left me to beguile the tedious moments in whatever manner I pleased.

"I have omitted mentioning one incident that happened between the detection of your flight and our expedition to Chetasco. Having formed a plausible conjecture as to him who walked in the long-

long room, it was obvious to conclude that he who purloined your manuscripts and the walker were the same personage: it was likewise easily inferred that the letters were secreted in the cedar chest, or in some other part of the room. Instances similar to this have heretofore occurred: men have employed anxious months in search of that which, in a freak of noctambulation, was hidden by their own hands.

"A search was immediately commenced; and your letters were found, carefully concealed between the rafters and shingles of the roof, in a spot where, if suspicion had not been previously excited, they would have remained till the vernal rains and the summer heats had insensibly destroyed them. This packet

I carried with me, knowing the value which you set upon them, and there being no receptacle equally safe, but your own cabinet, which was locked.

"Having, as I said, reached this house, and being left alone, I bethought me of the treasure I possessed. I was unacquainted with the reasons for which these papers were so precious: they probably had some momentous and intimate connection with your own history; as such they could not be of little value to me; and this moment of inoccupation and regrets was as suitable as any other to the task of perusing them: I drew them forth, therefore, and laid them on the table in this chamber.

"The rest is known to you. During a mo-

a momentary absence, you entered.—Surely no interview of ancient friends ever took place in so unexpected and abrupt a manner! You were dead; I mourned for you as one whom I loved, and whom Fate had snatched for ever from my sight: now, in a blissful hour, you had risen; and my happiness in thus embracing you is tenfold greater than would have been experienced if no uncertainties and perils had protracted our meeting."

CHAP. VIII.

HERE ended the tale of Sarsefield. Humiliation and joy were mingled in my heart. The events that preceded my awakening in the cave were now luminous and plain. What explication was more obvious? What but this solution ought to have been suggested by the conduct I had witnessed in Clithero?

Clithero!—Was not this the man whom Clithero

Clithero had robbed of his friend? Was not this the lover of Mrs. Lorimer, the object of the persecutions of Wiatte? Was it not now given me to investigate the truth of this stupendous tale—to dissipate the doubts which obstinately clung to my imagination respecting it?

But soft! Had not Sarsefield said that he was married? Was Mrs. Lorimer so speedily forgotten by him; or was the narrative of Clithero the web of imposture or the raving of insanity?

These new ideas banished all personal considerations from my mind. I looked eagerly into the face of my friend, and exclaimed, in a dubious accent—"How say you? Married?—When?—To whom?"

"Yes, Huntly, I am wedded to the most excellent of women: to her am I indebted for happiness, and wealth, and dignity, and honour; to her do I owe the power of being the benefactor and protector of you and your sisters. She longs to embrace you as a son. To become truly her son, will depend upon your own choice, and that of one who was the companion of our voyage."

"Heavens!" cried I, in a transport of exultation and astonishment—"of whom do you speak?—of the mother of Clarice—the sister of Wiatte—the sister of the ruffian who laid snares for her life, who pursued you and the unhappy Clithero with the bitterest animosity?"

My friend started at these sounds as if

if the earth had yawned at his feet: his countenance was equally significant of terror and rage. As soon as he regained the power of utterance, he spoke.—"Clithero!—Curses light upon thy lips for having uttered that detested name!—Thousands of miles have I flown to shun the hearing of it. Is the madman here?—have you set eyes upon him?—does he yet crawl upon the face of the earth? Unhappy, unparalleled, unheard-of, thankless miscreant! has he told his execrable falsehoods here?—has he dared to utter names so sacred as those of Euphemia Lorimer and Clarice?"

"He has: he has told a tale that had all the appearances of truth."

"Out upon the villain! The truth! Truth would prove him to be unnatural—devilish—a thing for which no language has yet provided a name! He has called himself unhappy—no doubt, a victim to injustice, overtaken by unmerited calamity:—say, has he fooled thee with such tales?"

"No: his tale was a catalogue of crimes and miseries of which he was the author and sufferer. You know not his motives, his horrors."

"His deeds were monstrous and infernal—his motives were sordid and flagitious: to display all their ugliness and infamy was not his province:—no; he did not tell you that he stole at midnight to the

the chamber of his mistress—a woman who astonished the world by her loftiness and magnanimity, by indefatigable beneficence and unswerving equity—who had lavished on this wretch, whom she snatched from the dirt, all the goods of fortune, all the benefits of education, all the treasures of love, every provocation to gratitude, every stimulant to justice.

"He did not tell you that, in recompence for every benefit, he stole upon her sleep, and aimed a dagger at her breast. There was no room for flight, or ambiguity, or prevarication: she whom he meant to murder stood near, saw the lifted weapon, and heard him confess and glory in his purposes.

"No wonder that the shock bereft her for a time of life. The interval was seized by the ruffian to effect his escape; the rebukes of justice were shunned by a wretch conscious of his inexpiable guilt. These things he has hidden from you, and has supplied their place by a tale specious as false."

"No: among the number of his crimes, hypocrisy is not to be counted. These things are already known to me: he spared himself too little in the narrative; the excellencies of his lady, her claims to gratitude and veneration, were urged beyond their true bounds. His attempts upon her life were related: it is true that he desired and endeavoured to destroy her."

"How!

"How! has he told you this?"

"He has told me all. Alas! the cr
minal intention has been amply expiated

"What mean you? Whence, a
how came he hither? Where is he now
I will not occupy the same land, th
same world with him. Have this woma
and her daughter lighted on the sho
haunted by this infernal and implacab
enemy?"

"Alas! it is doubtful whether h
exists! If he lives, he is no longer t
be feared: but he lives not; famine an
remorse have utterly consumed him."

"Famine!—remorse! You talk i
riddles!"

"He has concealed himself in the desert; he has abjured the intercourse of mankind; he has shut himself in caverns, where famine must inevitably expedite that death for which he longs as the only solace of his woes. To no imagination are his offences blacker and more odious than to his own. I had hopes of rescuing him from this fate; but my own infirmities and errors have afforded me sufficient occupation."

Sarsefield renewed his imprecations on the memory of that unfortunate man, and his enquiries as to the circumstances that led him into this remote district. His enquiries were not to be answered by one in my present condition: my languors and fatigues had now gained a pitch that was insupportable. The wound

in my face had been chafed and inflamed by the cold water and the bleak air; and the pain attending it would no longer suffer my attention to stray. I sunk upon the floor, and entreated him to afford me the respite of a few hours repose.

He was sensible of the deplorableness of my condition, and chid himself for the negligence of which he had already been guilty. He lifted me to the bed, and deliberated on the mode he should pursue for my relief. Some mollifying application to my wound was immediately necessary; but in our present lonely condition it was not at hand: it could only be procured from a distance; it was proper therefore to hasten to the nearest inhabited dwelling, which belonged to one

by

by name Walton, and supply himself with such medicines as could be found.

Meanwhile, there was no danger of molestation and intrusion. There was reason to expect the speedy return of those who had gone in the pursuit of the savages: this was their place of rendezvous, and hither they appointed to reassemble before the morrow's dawn. The distance of the neighbouring farm was small, and Sarsefield promised to be expeditious: he left me to myself and my own ruminations.

Harassed by fatigue and pain, I had yet power to ruminate on that series of unparalleled events that had lately happened. I wept; but my tears flowed from a double source: from sorrow, on account

account of the untimely fate of my uncle; and from joy, that my sisters were preserved—that Sarsefield had returned, and was not unhappy.

I reflected on the untoward destiny of Clithero: part of his calamity consisted in the consciousness of having killed his patroness; but it now appeared, though by some infatuation I had not previously suspected, that the first impulse of sorrow in the lady had been weakened by reflection and by time—that the prejudice persuading her that her life and that of her brother were to endure and to terminate together, was conquered by experience or by argument. She had come, in company with Sarsefield and Clarice, to America. What influence might these events have upon the gloomy

gloomy meditations of Clithero? Was it possible to bring them together, to win the maniac from his solitude, wrest from him his fatal purposes, and restore him to communion with the beings whose imagined indignation is the torment of his life?

These musings were interrupted by sounds from below; which were easily interpreted into tokens of the return of those with whom Sarsefield had parted at the promontory: voices were confused and busy, but not turbulent. They entered the lower room; and the motion of chairs and tables shewed that they were preparing to rest themselves after their toils.

Few of them were unacquainted with me,

me, since they probably were residents in this district: no inconvenience, therefore, would follow from an interview, though on their part wholly unexpected; besides, Sarsefield would speedily return, and none of the present visitants would be likely to withdraw to this apartment.

Meanwhile, I lay upon the bed, with my face turned towards the door, and languidly gazing at the ceiling and walls. Just then a musket was discharged in the room below. The shock affected me mechanically, and the first impulse of surprise made me almost start upon my feet.

The sound was followed by confusion and bustle: some rushed forth, and called

called on each other to run different ways, and the words—"That is he—stop him!" were spoken in a tone of eagerness and rage. My weakness and pain were for a moment forgotten, and my whole attention was bent to discover the meaning of this hubbub. The musket which I had brought with me to this chamber, lay across the bed: unknowing of the consequences of this affray with regard to myself, I was prompted, by a kind of self-preserving instinct, to lay hold of the gun, and prepare to repel any attack that might be made upon me.

A few moments elapsed, when I thought I heard light footsteps in the entry leading to this room. I had no time to construe these signals; but watching fearfully

fearfully the entrance, I grasped my weapon with new force, and raised it so as to be ready at the moment of danger. I did not watch long. A figure cautiously thrust itself forward: the first glance was sufficient to inform me that this intruder was an Indian, and of consequence, an enemy. He was unarmed. Looking eagerly on all sides, he at last spied me as I lay. My appearance threw him into consternation; and after the fluctuation of an instant, he darted to the window, threw up the sash, and leaped out upon the ground.

His flight might have been easily arrested by my shot; but surprise, added to my habitual antipathy to bloodshed, unless in cases of absolute necessity, made me hesitate. He was gone, and I

was

was left to mark the progress of the drama. The silence was presently broken by firing at a distance: three shots, in quick succession, were followed by the deepest pause.

That the party recently arrived had brought with them one or more captives, and that by some sudden effort the prisoners had attempted to escape, was the only supposition that I could form: by what motives either of them could be induced to seek concealment in my chamber, could not be imagined.

I now heard a single step on the threshold below. Some one entered the common room: he traversed the floor during a few minutes, and then ascending the staircase, he entered my chamber.

It

It was Sarsefield. Trouble and dismay were strongly written on his countenance: he seemed totally unconscious of my presence; his eyes were fixed upon the floor, and as he continued to move across the room, he heaved forth deep sighs.

This deportment was mournful and mysterious: it was little in unison with those appearances which he wore at our parting, and must have been caused by some event that had since happened. My curiosity impelled me to recall him from his reverie. I rose, and seizing him by the arm, looked at him with an air of inquisitive anxiety: it was needless to speak.

He

He noticed my movement, and turning towards me, spoke, in a tone of some resentment—"Why did you deceive me? Did you not say Clithero was dead?"

"I said so because it was my belief. Know you any thing to the contrary?—Heaven grant that he be still alive, and that our mutual efforts may restore him to peace!"

"Heaven grant," replied my friend, with a vehemence that bordered upon fury—"Heaven grant that he may live thousands of years, and know not in their long course a moment's respite from remorse and from anguish! But this prayer is fruitless: he is not dead, but death hovers over him. Should he live, he

he will live only to defy justice and perpetrate new horrors. My skill might perhaps save him; but a finger shall not be moved to avert his fate.

"Little did I think that the wretch whom my friends rescued from the power of the savages, and brought wounded and expiring hither, was Clithero. They sent for me in haste to afford him surgical assistance. I found him stretched upon the floor below, deserted, helpless, and bleeding: the moment I beheld him he was recognised. The last of evils was to look upon the face of this assassin; but that evil is passed, and shall never be endured again.

"Rise and come with me: accommodation is prepared for you at Walcot's. Let

Let us leave this house; and the moment you are able to perform a journey, abandon for ever this district."

I could not readily consent to this proposal. Clithero had been delivered from captivity; but was dying for want of that aid which Sarsefield was able to afford. Was it not inhuman to desert him in this extremity? What offence had he committed that deserved such implacable vengeance? Nothing I had heard from Sarsefield was in contradiction to his own story. His deed, imperfectly observed, would appear to be atrocious and detestable; but the view of all its antecedent and accompanying events and motives, would surely place it in the list, not of crimes, but of misfortunes.

But

But what is that guilt which no penitence can expiate? Had not Clithero's remorse been more than adequate to crimes far more deadly and enormous than this? This, however, was no time to argue with the passions of Sarsefield. Nothing but a repetition of Clithero's tale could vanquish his prepossessions and mollify his rage; but this repetition was impossible to be given by me till a moment of safety and composure.

These thoughts made me linger, but hindered me from attempting to change the determination of my friend. He renewed his importunities for me to fly with him—he dragged me by the arm; and, wavering and reluctant, I followed where he chose to lead. He crossed the common room with hurried steps, and

eyes averted from a figure which instantly fastened my attention.

It was, indeed, Clithero whom I now beheld, supine, polluted with blood, his eyes closed, and apparently insensible: this object was gazed at with emotions that rooted me to the spot. Sarsefield, perceiving me determined to remain where I was, rushed out of the house, and disappeared.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

I HUNG over the unhappy wretch, whose emaciated form and rueful features sufficiently bespoke that savage hands had only completed that destruction which his miseries had begun: he was mangled by the tomahawk in a shocking manner, and there was little hope that human skill could save his life.

I was sensible of nothing but compassion: I acted without design, when

seating myself on the floor, I raised his head and placed it on my knees. This movement awakened his attention, and opening his eyes, he fixed them on my countenance: they testified neither insensibility, nor horror, nor distraction. A faint emotion of surprise gave way to an appearance of tranquillity. Having perceived these tokens of a state less hopeless than I at first imagined, I spoke to him.

"My friend, how do you feel? Can any thing be done for you?"

He answered me in a tone more firm, and with more coherence of ideas, than previous appearances had taught me to expect.

"No,"

"No," said he, "thy kindness, good youth, can avail me nothing. The end of my existence here is at hand. May my guilt be expiated by the miseries that I have suffered, and my good deeds only attend me to the presence of my divine Judge!

"I am waiting, but not with trembling or dismay, for this close of my sorrows. I breathed but one prayer, and that prayer has been answered: I asked for an interview with thee, young man; but feeling as I now feel, this interview, so much desired, was beyond my hope. Now thou art come in due season to hear the last words that I shall need to utter.

"I wanted to assure thee that thy

efforts for my benefit were not useless: they have saved me from murdering myself; a guilt more inexpiable than any which it was in my power to commit.

"I retired to the innermost recess of Norwalk, and gained the summit of a hill, by subterranean paths. This hill I knew to be on all sides inaccessible to human footsteps, and the subterranean passages were closed up by stones: here I believed my solitude exempt from interruption, and my death, in consequence of famine, sure.

"This persuasion was not taken away by your appearance on the opposite steep. The chasm which severed us, I knew to be impassable.—I withdrew from your sight.

"Some

"Some time after, awakening from a long sleep, I found victuals beside me. He that brought them was invisible. For a time I doubted whether some messenger of heaven had not interposed for my salvation. How other than by supernatural means my retreat should be explored, I was unable to conceive: the summit was encompassed by dizzy and profound gulfs, and the subterranean passages were still closed.

"This opinion, though corrected by subsequent reflection, tended to change the course of my desperate thoughts.—My hunger, thus importunately urged, would not abstain, and I eat of the food that was provided. Henceforth I determined to live, to resume the path of obscurity and labour which I had relin-

quished, and wait till my God should summon me to retribution:—to anticipate his call, is only to redouble our guilt.

"I designed not to return to Inglefield's service, but to chuse some other and remoter district. Meanwhile, I had left in his possession a treasure which my determination to die had rendered of no value, but which my change of resolution, restored. Enclosed in a box at Inglefield's, were the memoirs of Euphemia Lorimer; by which in all my vicissitudes I had been hitherto accompanied, and from which I consented to part only because I had refused to live: my existence was now to be prolonged, and this manuscript was once more to constitute the torment and the solace of my being.

"I hastened

"I hastened to Inglefield's by night. There was no need to warn him of my purpose; I desired that my fate should be an eternal secret to my ancient master and his neighbours. The apartment containing my box, was well known, and easily accessible.

"The box was found, but broken and rifled of its treasure. My transports of astonishment, and indignation, and grief, yielded to the resumption of my fatal purpose: I hastened back to the hill, and determined anew to perish.

"This mood continued to the evening of the ensuing day. Wandering over rocks and pits, I discovered the manuscript lying under a jutting precipice. The chance that brought it hither was

not less propitious and miraculous, than that by which I had been supplied with food: it produced a similar effect upon my feelings; and while in possession of this manuscript I was reconciled to the means of life. I left the mountain, and traversing the wilderness, stopped in Chetasco. That kind of employment which I sought was instantly procured; but my new vocation was scarcely assumed when a band of savages invaded our security.

"Rambling in the desert by moonlight, I encountered these foes: they rushed upon me, and after numerous wounds, which, for the present, neither killed nor disabled me, they compelled me to keep pace with them in their retreat. Some hours have passed since the troop

troop was overtaken, and my liberty redeemed. Hardships and repeated wounds, inflicted at the moment when the invaders were surprised and slain, have brought me to my present condition. I rejoice that my course is about to terminate."

Here the speaker was interrupted by the tumultuous entrance of the party by whom he had been brought hither. Their astonishment at seeing me sustaining the head of the dying man, may be easily conceived. Their surprise was more strongly excited by the disappearance of the captive whom they had left in this apartment bound hand and foot. It now appeared that of the savage troop who had adventured thus far in search of pillage and blood, all had been destroyed

but two, who had been led hither as prisoners. On their entrance into this house, one of the party had been sent to Walcot's to summon Sarsefield to the aid of the wounded man; while others had gone in search of cords to secure the arms and legs of the captives, who had hitherto been manacled imperfectly.

The cords were brought, and one of them was bound; but the other, before the same operation was begun upon him, broke, by a sudden effort, the feeble ligatures by which he was at present constrained, and seizing a musket that lay near him, fired on his enemies, and then rushed out of doors. All eagerly engaged in the pursuit: the savage was fleet as a deer, and finally eluded his pursuers.

While

While their attention was thus engaged abroad, he that remained found means to extricate his wrists and ancles from his bonds; and betaking himself to the stairs, escaped, as I before described, through the window of the room which I had occupied. They pestered me with their curiosity and wonder, for I was known to all of them; but waving the discussions of my own concerns, I entreated their assistance to carry Clithero to the chamber and the bed which I had just deserted.

I now, in spite of pain, fatigue, and watchfulness, set out to go to Walton's. Sarsefield was ready to receive me at the door, and the kindness and compassion of the family were active in my behalf. I was conducted to a chamber, and

and provided with suitable attendance and remedies.

I was not unmindful of the more deplorable condition of Clithero: I incessantly meditated on the means for his relief. His case stood in need of all the vigilance and skill of a physician, and Sarsefield was the only one of that profession whose aid could be seasonably administered: Sarsefield therefore must be persuaded to bestow this aid.

There were but two modes of conquering his abhorrence of this man:—to prepossess my friend with the belief of the innocence of Clithero, or to sooth him into pity by a picture of remorse and suffering. The latter could best be done, and in a manner most conformable to truth,

truth, by a simple recital of the incidents that had befallen, and by repeating the confession which had been extorted from Clithero.

I requested all but my friend to leave my chamber; and then, soliciting a patient hearing, began the narrative of Waldegrave's death—of the detection of Clithero beneath the shade of the elm—of the suspicions which were thence produced, and of the forest interview to which these suspicions gave birth: I then repeated, without variation or addition, the tale which was then told; I likewise mentioned my subsequent transactions in Norwalk so far as they illustrated the destiny of Clithero.

During

During this recital, I fixed my eyes upon the countenance of Sarsefield, and watched every emotion as it rose or declined: with the progress of my tale, his indignation and his fury grew less, and at length gave place to horror and compassion.

His seat became uneasy, his pulse throbbed with new vehemence. When I came to the motives which prompted the unhappy man to visit the chamber of his mistress, he started from his seat, and sometimes strode across the floor in a troubled mood, and sometimes stood before me with his breath almost suspended in the eagerness of his attention. When I mentioned the lifted dagger, the shriek from behind, and the apparition that

that interposed, he shuddered and drew back as if a dagger had been aimed at his breast.

When the tale was done, some time elapsed in mutual and profound silence. My friend's thoughts were involved in a mournful and indefinable reverie: from this he at length recovered, and spoke.

"It is true; a tale like this could never be the fruit of invention, or be invented to deceive. He has done himself injustice: his character was spotless and fair; all his moral properties seemed to have resolved themselves into gratitude, fidelity, and honour.

"We parted at the door late in the evening, as he mentioned; and he guessed truly

truly that subsequent reflection had induced me to return and to disclose the truth to Mrs. Lorimer. Clarice, relieved by the sudden death of her friend, and unexpectedly by all, arrived at the same hour.

"These tidings astonished, afflicted, and delighted Mrs. Lorimer: her brother's death had been long believed by all but herself; to find her doubts verified, and his existence ascertained, was the dearest consolation that he ever could bestow. She was afflicted at the proofs that had been noted of the continuance of his depravity; but she dreaded no danger to herself from his malignity or vengeance.

"The ignorance and prepossessions of this

this woman were remarkable: on this subject only she was perverse, headlong, obstinate. Her anxiety to benefit this arch-ruffian occupied her whole thoughts, and allowed her no time to reflect upon the reasonings or remonstrances of others. She could not be prevailed on to deny herself to his visits, and I parted from her in the utmost perplexity.

"A messenger came to me at midnight, entreating my immediate presence: some disater had happened, but of what kind the messenger was unable to tell. My fears easily conjured up the image of Wiatte: terror scarcely allowed me to breathe. When I entered the house of Mrs. Lorimer, I was conducted to her chamber. She lay upon the bed in a state of stupefaction, that rose from some mental

mental cause. Clarice sat by her, wringing her hands, and pouring forth her tears without intermission. Neither could explain to me the nature of the scene. I made enquiries of the servants and attendants: they merely said that the family, as usual, had retired to rest; but their Lady's bell rung with great violence, and called them in haste to her chamber, where they found her in a swoon upon the floor, and the young lady in the utmost affright and perturbation.

"Suitable means being used, Mrs. Lorimer had at length recovered; but was still nearly insensible. I went to Clithero's apartments; but he was not to be found, and the domestics informed me that, since he had gone with me, he had not returned. The doors between this chamber

chamber and the court were open: hence that some dreadful interview had taken place, perhaps with Wiatte, was an unavoidable conjecture. He had withdrawn, however, without committing any personal injury.

"I need not mention my reflections upon this scene: all was tormenting doubt and suspense till the morning arrived, and tidings were received that Wiatte had been killed in the streets. This event was antecedent to that which had occasioned Mrs. Lorimer's distress and alarm. I now remembered that fatal prepossession by which she was governed, and her frantic belief that her death and that of her brother were to fall out at the same time. Could some witness of his death have brought her tidings

tidings of it? Had he penetrated, unexpected and unlicensed, to her chamber; and were these the effects produced by the intelligence?

"Presently I knew that not only Wiatte was dead, but that Clithero had killed him. Clithero had not been known to return, and was no where to be found: he then was the bearer of these tidings; for none but he could have found access or egress, without disturbing the servants.

"These doubts were at length at an end: in a broken and confused manner, and after the lapse of some days, the monstrous and portentous truth was disclosed. After our interview, Mrs. Lorimer and her daughter had retired to the same chamber; the former had withdrawn to her

her closet, and the latter to bed. Some one's entrance alarmed Mrs. Lorimer, and coming forth after a moment's pause, the spectacle which Clithero has too faithfully described, presented itself.

"What could I think? A life of uniform hypocrisy, or a sudden loss of reason, were the only suppositions to be formed. Clithero was the parent of fury and abhorrence in my heart: in either case I started at the name—I shuddered at the image of the apostate or the maniac.

"What! kill the brother whose existence was interwoven with that of his benefactress and his friend!—then hasten to her chamber, and attempt her life!—lift a dagger to destroy her who had

been the author of his being and his happiness!

"He that could meditate a deed like this, was no longer man: an agent from hell had mastered his faculties; he was become the engine of infernal malice, against whom it was the duty of all mankind to rise up in arms, and never to desist till, by shattering it to atoms, its power to injure was taken away.

"All enquiries to discover the place of his retreat were vain. No wonder, methought, that he wrapped himself in the folds of impenetrable secrecy; curbed, checked, baffled in the midst of his career, no wonder that he shrunk into obscurity—that he fled from justice and revenge—that he dared not meet the rebukes

rebukes of that eye which, dissolving in tenderness, or flashing with disdain, had ever been irresistible.

"But how shall I describe Mrs. Lorimer's condition? Clithero she had cherished from his infancy: he was the stay, the consolation, the pride of her life. His projected alliance with her daughter, made him still more dear. Her eloquence was never tired of expatiating on his purity and rectitude. No wonder that she delighted in this theme, for he was her own work—his virtues were the creatures of her bounty.

"How hard to be endured was this sad reverse! She can be tranquil, but never more will she be happy. To promote her forgetfulness of him, I per-

 suaded

suaded her to leave her country, which contained a thousand memorials of past calamity, and which was lapsing fast into civil broils. Clarice has accompanied us, and time may effect the happiness of others by her means, though she can never remove the melancholy of her mother.

"I have listened to your tale, not without compassion.—What would you have me to do? To prolong his life would be merely to protract his misery.

"He can never be regarded with complacency by my wife; he can never be thought of without shuddering by Clarice. Common ills are not without a cure less than death; but here all remedies are vain: consciousness itself is the malady,

malady, the pest, of which he only is cured who ceases to think."

I could not but assent to this mournful conclusion. Yet, though death was better to Clithero than life, could not some of his mistakes be rectified? Euphemia Lorimer, contrary to his belief, was still alive. He dreamed that she was dead, and a thousand evils were imagined to flow from that death: this death, and its progeny of ills, haunted his fancy, and added keenness to his remorse. Was it not our duty to rectify this error?

Sarsefield reluctantly assented to the truth of my arguments on this head: he consented to return, and afford the dying man the consolation of knowing

that the being whom he adored as a benefactor and parent, had not been deprived of existence, though bereft of peace, by his act.

During Sarsefield's absence my mind was busy in revolving the incidents that had just occurred. I ruminated the last words of Clithero: there was somewhat in his narrative that was obscure and contradictory. He had left the manuscript which he so much and so justly prized, in his cabinet: he entered the chamber in my absence, and found the cabinet unfastened, and the manuscript gone. It was I by whom the cabinet was opened; but the manuscript supposed to be contained in it, was buried in the earth beneath the elm. How

should Clithero be unacquainted with its situation, since none but he could have dug for it this grave?

This mystery vanished when I reflected on the history of my own manuscript. Clithero had buried his treasure with his own hands, as mine had been secreted by myself; but both acts had been performed during sleep: the deed was neither prompted by the will, nor noticed by the senses of him by whom it was done. Disastrous and humiliating is the state of man! By his own hands is constructed the mass of misery and error in which his steps are for ever involved.

Thus it was with thy friend. Hurried on by phantoms too indistinct to be

now recalled, I wandered from my chamber to the desert: I plunged into some unvisited cavern, and easily proceeded till I reached the edge of a pit: there my step was deceived, and I tumbled headlong from the precipice. The fall bereaved me of sense, and I continued breathless and motionless during the remainder of the night and the ensuing day.

How little cognizance have men over the actions and motives of each other! How total is our blindness with regard to our own performances! Who would have sought me in the bowels of this mountain? Ages might have passed away before my bones would be discovered in this tomb by some traveller whom

whom curiosity had prompted to explore it.

I was roused from these reflections by Sarsefield's return. Enquiring into Clithero's condition, he answered that the unhappy man was insensible; but that, notwithstanding numerous and dreadful gashes in different parts of his body, it was possible that, by submitting to the necessary treatment, he might recover.

Encouraged by this information, I endeavoured to awaken the zeal and compassion of my friend in Clithero's behalf. He recoiled with involuntary shuddering from any task which would confine him to the presence of this man. Time and reflection, he said, might introduce dif-

ferent sentiments and feelings; but at present he could not but regard this person as a maniac, whose disease was irremediable, and whose existence could not be protracted but to his own misery and the misery of others.

Finding him irreconcilably averse to any scheme connected with the welfare of Clithero, I began to think that his assistance as a surgeon was by no means necessary: he had declared that the sufferer needed nothing more than common treatment; and to this the skill of a score of aged women in this district, furnished with simples culled from the forest, and pointed out, of old time, by Indian *leeches*, was no less adequate than that of Sarsefield. These women were ready and officious in their charity, and none

none of them were prepossessed against the sufferer by a knowledge of his genuine story.

Sarsefield, meanwhile, was impatient for my removal to Inglefield's habitation; and that venerable friend was no less impatient to receive me. My hurts were superficial, and my strength sufficiently repaired by a night's repose: next day, I went thither, leaving Clithero to the care of his immediate neighbours.

Sarsefield's engagements compelled him to prosecute his journey into Virginia, from which he had somewhat deviated, in order to visit Solebury: he proposed to return in less than a month, and then to take me in his company to New-York. He has treated me with

paternal tenderness, and insists upon the previlege of consulting for my interest, as if he were my real father. Meanwhile, these views have been disclosed to Inglefield; and it is with him that I am to remain, with my sisters, until his return.

My reflections have been various and tumultuous: they have been busy in relation to you, to Weymouth, and especially to Clithero. The latter, polluted with gore, and weakened by abstinence, fatigue, and the loss of blood, appeared in my eyes to be in a much more dangerous condition than the event proved him to be. I was punctually informed of the progress of his cure, and proposed in a few days to visit him. The duty of explaining the truth respecting the present

sent condition of Mrs. Lorimer, had devolved upon me. By imparting this intelligence, I hoped to work the most auspicious revolutions in his feelings; and prepared, therefore, with alacrity, for an interview.

In this hope I was destined to be disappointed. On the morning on which I intended to visit him, a messenger arrived from the house in which he was entertained, and informed us that the family, on entering the sick man's apartment, had found it deserted. It appeared that Clithero had, during the night, risen from his bed, and gone secretly forth. No traces of his flight have since been discovered.

But, Oh my friend! the death of Waldegrave, thy brother, is at length divested of uncertainty and mystery! Hitherto, I had been able to form no conjecture respecting it; but the solution was found shortly after this time.

Queen Mab, three days after my adventure, was seized in her hut on suspicion of having aided and counselled her countrymen in their late depredations. She was not to be awed or intimidated by the treatment she received; but readily confessed and gloried in the mischief she had done; and accounted for it by enumerating the injuries which she had received from her neighbours.

These

These injuries consisted in contemptuous or neglectful treatment, and in the rejection of groundless and absurd claims. The people of Chetasco were less obsequious to her humours than those of Solebury, her ancient neighbourhood; and her imagination brooded for a long time over nothing but schemes of revenge: she became sullen, irascible, and spent more of her time in solitude than ever.

A troop of her countrymen at length visited her hut. Their intentions being hostile, they concealed from the inhabitants their presence in this quarter of the country. Some motives induced them to withdraw and postpone, for the present, the violence which they meditated.

One

One of them, however, more sanguinary and audacious than the rest, would not depart without some gratification of his vengeance: he left his associates, and penetrated by night into Solebury, resolving to attack the first human being whom he should meet. It was the fate of thy unhappy brother to encounter this ruffian, whose sagacity made him forbear to tear away the usual trophy from the dead, lest he should afford grounds for suspicion as to the authors of the evil.

Satisfied with this exploit, he rejoined his companions, and, after an interval of three weeks, returned with a more numerous party, to execute a more extensive project of destruction. They were counselled,

selled, and guided in all their movements, by Queen Mab, who now explained these particulars, and boldly defied her oppressors: her usual obstinacy and infatuation induced her to remain in her ancient dwelling, and prepare to meet the consequences.

This disclosure awakened anew all the regrets and anguish which flowed from that disaster. It has been productive, however, of some benefit: suspicions and doubts, by which my soul was harrassed, and which were injurious to the innocent, are now at an end. It is likewise some imperfect consolation to reflect that the assassin has himself been killed, and probably by my own hand. The shedder of blood no longer lives to

to pursue his vocation, and justice is satisfied.

Thus have I fulfilled my promise to compose a minute relation of my sufferings. I remembered my duty to thee, and as soon as I was able to hold a pen, employed it to inform thee of my welfare. I could not at that time enter into particulars, but reserved a more copious narrative till a period of more health and leisure.

On looking back, I am surprised at the length to which my story has run: I thought that a few days would suffice to complete it; but one page has insensibly been added to another, till I have consumed weeks and filled volumes. Here I will

I will draw to a close. I will send you what I have written, and discuss with you in conversation my other immediate concerns, and my schemes for the future. As soon as I have seen Sarsefield, I will visit you.—Farewell!

E. H.

Solsbury, November 10.

LETTER

LETTER I.

To Mr. Sarsefield.

Philadelphia.

I CAME hither but ten minutes ago, and write this letter in the bar of the stage-house. I wish not to lose a moment in informing you of what has happened. I cannot do justice to my own feelings when I reflect upon the rashness of which I have been guilty.

I will

I will give you the particulars to-morrow. At present, I shall only say that Clithero is alive, is apprized of your wife's arrival and abode in New-York, and has set out, with mysterious intentions, to visit her.

May Heaven avert the consequences of such a design! May you be enabled by some means to prevent their meeting! If you cannot prevent it——but I must not reason on such an event, nor lengthen out this letter.

E. H

LETTER

LETTER II.

To the same.

I WILL now relate the particulars which I yesterday promised to send you. You heard through your niece of my arrival at Inglefield's, in Solebury. My enquiries you may readily suppose would turn upon the fate of my friend's servant, Clithero, whose last disappearance was so strange

strange and abrupt, and of whom since that time I had heard nothing. You are indifferent to his fate, and are anxious only that his existence and misfortunes may be speedily forgotten. I confess that it is somewhat otherwise with me: I pity him; I wish to relieve him, and cannot admit the belief that his misery is without a cure. I want to find him out; I want to know his condition, and, if possible, to afford him comfort, and inspire him with courage and hope.

Inglefield replied to my questions—"Oh yes! he has appeared—the strange being is again upon the stage! Shortly after he left his sick bed, I heard from Philip Beddington, of Chetasco, that Deb's hut had found a new tenant. At first, I imagined that the Scotsman who built it, had returned;

returned; but making closer enquiries, I found that the new tenant was my servant. I had no inclination to visit him myself, but frequently enquired respecting him of those who lived or passed that way, and find that he still lives there."

"But how?" said I—"what is his mode of subsistence? The winter has been no time for cultivation, and he found, I presume, nothing in the ground."

"Deb's hut," replied my friend, "is his lodging and his place of retirement; but food and clothing he procures by labouring on a neighbouring farm. This farm is next to that of Beddington, who consequently knows something of his present situation. I find little or no difference

difference in his present deportment, and those appearances which he assumed while living with me; except that he retires every night to his hut, and holds as little intercourse as possible with the rest of mankind. He dines at his employer's table, but his supper, which is nothing but rye bread, he carries home with him; and at all those times, when disengaged from employment, he secludes himself in his hut, or wanders nobody knows whither."

This was the substance of Inglefield's intelligence. I gleaned from it some satisfaction: it proved the condition of Clithero to be less deplorable and desperate than I had previously imagined: his fatal and gloomy thoughts seemed to have somewhat yielded to tranquillity.

In

In the course of my reflections, however, I could not but perceive that his condition, though eligible when compared with what it once was, was likewise disastrous and humiliating, compared with his youthful hopes and his actual merits. For such a one to mope away his life in this unsocial and savage state, was deeply to be deplored: it was my duty, if possible, to prevail on him to relinquish his scheme; and what more would be requisite for that end than to inform him of the truth?

The source of his dejection was the groundless belief that he had occasioned the death of his benefactress: it was this alone that could justly produce remorse or grief. It was a distempered imagination both in him and in me, that had given

given birth to this opinion; since the terms of his narrative, impartially considered, were far from implying that catastrophe: to him, however, the evidence which he possessed was incontestible. No deductions from probability could overthrow his belief: this could only be effected by similar and counter evidence. To apprize him that she was now alive, in possession of some degree of happiness, the wife of Sarsefield, and an actual resident on this shore, would dissipate the sanguinary apparition that haunted him, cure his diseased intellects, and restore him to those vocations for which his talents, and that rank in society for which his education had qualified him. Influenced by these thoughts, I determined to visit his retreat. Being obliged to leave Solebury the next day, I resolved

to set out the same afternoon, and stopping in Chetasco for the night, seek his habitation at the hour when he had probably retired to it.

This was done. I arrived at Beddington's at night fall. My enquiries respecting Clithero obtained for me the same intelligence from him which I had received from Inglefield. Deb's hut was three miles from this habitation; and thither, when the evening had somewhat advanced, I repaired. This was the spot which had witnessed so many perils during the last year, and my emotions on approaching it were awful. With palpitating heart and quick steps, I traversed the road, skirted on each side by thickets, and the area before the house. The dwelling was by no means in so ruinous a state

as

as when I last visited it: the crannies between the logs had been filled up, and the light within was perceivable only at a crevice in the door.

Looking through this crevice, I perceived a fire in the chimney; but the object of my visit was no where to be seen. I knocked, and requested admission; but no answer was made. At length I lifted the latch, and entered. Nobody was there.

It was obvious to suppose that Clithero had gone abroad for a short time, and would speedily return; or perhaps some engagement had detained him at his labour later than usual: I therefore seated myself on some straw near the fire, which, with a woollen rug, appeared to constitute his only bed. The rude bed-

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stead which I formerly met with, was gone; the slender furniture, likewise, which had then engaged my attention, had disappeared: there was nothing capable of human use but a heap of faggots in the corner, which seemed intended for fuel. How slender is the accommodation which Nature has provided for man! and how scanty is the portion which our physical necessities require!

While ruminating upon this scene, and comparing past events with the objects before me, the dull whistling of the gale without gave place to the sound of footsteps. Presently the door opened, and Clithero entered the apartment. His aspect and guise were not essentially different from those which he wore when an inhabitant of Solebury.

To

To find his hearth occupied by another, appeared to create the deepest surprise. He looked at me without any tokens of remembrance! His features assumed a more austere expression; and after scowling on my person for a moment, he withdrew his eyes, and placing in a corner a bundle which he bore in his hand, he turned, and seemed preparing to withdraw.

I was anxiously attentive to his demeanour, and as soon as I perceived his purpose to depart, leaped on my feet to prevent it. I took his hand, and affectionately pressing it, said—"Do you not know me? Have you so soon forgotten me who is truly your friend?"

He looked at me with some attention;

but again withdrew his eyes, and placed himself in silence on the seat which I had left. I seated myself near him; and a pause of mutual silence ensued.

"My mind was full of the purpose that brought me hither; but I knew not in what manner to communicate my ideas: several times I opened my lips to speak, but my perplexity continued, and suitable words refused to suggest themselves. At length I said, in a confused tone—"I came hither with a view to benefit a man with whose misfortunes his own lips have made me acquainted, and who has awakened in my breast the deepest sympathy. I know the cause and extent of his dejection; I know the event which has given birth to horror and remorse in his heart:—he believes that by his

his means his patroness and benefactress has found an untimely death."

These words produced a visible shock in my companion, which evinced that I had at least engaged his attention. I proceeded.

"This unhappy lady was cursed with a wicked and unnatural brother: she conceived a disproportionate affection for this brother, and erroneously imagined that her fate was blended with his—that their lives would necessarily terminate at the same period—and that, therefore, whoever was the contriver of his death, was likewise, by a fatal and invincible necessity, the author of her own.

"Clithero was her servant; but was raised by her bounty to the station of her son, and the rank of her friend. Clithero, in self-defence, took away the life of that unnatural brother; and in that deed falsely, but cogently believed that he had perpetrated the destruction of his benefactress.

"To ascertain the truth, he sought her presence: she was found; the tidings of her brother's death were communicated, and she sunk breathless at his feet."

At these words, Clithero started from the ground, and cast upon me looks of furious indignation.

"And come you hither," he muttered, "for

"for this end, to recount my offences, and drive me again to despair?"

"No," answered I, with quickness; "I come to outroot a fatal, but powerful illusion; I come to assure you that the woman with whose destruction you charge yourself, is *not dead!*"

These words, uttered with the most emphatical solemnity, merely produced looks in which contempt was mingled with anger. He continued silent.

"I perceive," resumed I, "that my words are disregarded. Would to Heaven I were able to conquer your incredulity, and shew you, not only the truth, but the probability of my tale! Can you not confide in me that Euphemia

Lorimer is now alive, is happy, is the wife of Sarsefield—that her brother is forgotten, and his murderer regarded without enmity or vengeance?"

He looked at me with a strange expression of contempt.

"Come," said he, at length, "make out thy assertion to be true: fall on thy knees, and invoke the thunder of heaven to light on thy head if thy words be false! Swear that Euphemia Lorimer is alive, happy, forgetful of Wiatte, and compassionate of me! Swear that thou hast seen her, talked with her, received from her own lips the confession of her pity for him who aimed a dagger at her bosom! Swear that she is Sarsefield's wife!"

I put

I put my hands together, and lifting my eyes to heaven, exclaimed — "I comply with your conditions—I call the omniscient God to witness that Euphemia Lorimer is alive—that I have seen her with these eyes, have talked with her, have inhabited the same house for months!"

These assévérations were listened to with shuddering: he laid not aside, however, an air of incredulity and contempt.

"Perhaps," said he, "thou canst point out the place of her abode—canst guide me to the city, the street, the very door of her habitation?"

"I can. She rises at this moment in the city of New-York, in Broadway, in a house contiguous to the——"

"'Tis well!" exclaimed my companion, in a tone loud, abrupt, and in the utmost degree vehement—"'tis well! Rash and infatuated youth! thou hast ratified, beyond appeal or forgiveness, thy own doom—thou hast once more let loose my steps, and sent me on a fearful journey—thou hast furnished the means of detecting thy imposture! I will fly to the spot which thou describest; I will ascertain thy falsehood with my own eyes: if she be alive, then am I reserved for the performance of a new crime; my evil destiny will have it so: if she be dead, I shall make *thee* expiate."

So saying, he darted through the door, and was gone in a moment, beyond my sight and my reach. I ran to the road, looked on every side, and called; but my calls

calls were repeated in vain—he had fled with the swiftness of a deer.

My own embarrassment, confusion, and terror were inexpressible. His last words were incoherent: they denoted the tumult and vehemence of frenzy; they intimated his resolution to seek the presence of your wife. I had furnished a clue which could not fail to conduct him to her presence. What might not be dreaded from the interview! Clithero is a maniac: this truth cannot be concealed. Your wife can with difficulty preserve her tranquillity when his image occurs to her remembrance; what must it be when he starts up before her in his neglected and ferocious guise, and armed with purposes perhaps as terrible as those which

which had formerly led him to her secret chamber and her bedside!

His meaning was obscurely conveyed: he talked of a deed for the performance of which his malignant fate had reserved him, which was to ensue their meeting, and which was to afford disastrous testimony of the infatuation which had led me hither.

Heaven grant that some means may suggest themselves to you of intercepting his approach! Yet I know not what means can be conceived. Some miraculous chance may befriend you; yet this is scarcely to be hoped: it is a visionary and fantastic base on which to rest our security.

I cannot

I cannot forget that my unfortunate temerity has created this evil: yet who could foresee this consequence of my intelligence? I imagined that Clithero was merely a victim of erroneous gratitude, a slave of the errors of his education and the prejudices of his rank—that his understanding was deluded by phantoms in the mask of virtue and duty, and not, as you have strenuously maintained, utterly subverted.

I shall not escape your censure, but I shall likewise gain your compassion: I have erred, not through sinister or malignant intentions, but from the impulse of misguided indeed, but powerful benevolence.

E. H.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To Edgar Huntly.

New-York.

EDGAR,

AFTER the fatigues of the day, I returned home. As I entered, my wife was breaking the seal of a letter; but, on seeing me, she forbore, and presented the letter to me.

"I saw,"

"I saw," said she, "by the superscription of this letter who the writer was; so, agreeably to your wishes, I proceeded to open it; but you have come just time enough to save me the trouble."

This letter was from you: it contained information relative to Clithero. See how imminent a chance it was that saved my wife from a knowledge of its contents! It required all my efforts to hide my perturbation from her, and excuse myself from shewing her the letter.

I know better than you the character of Clithero, and the consequences of a meeting between him and my wife: you may be sure that I would exert myself to prevent a meeting.

The method for me to pursue was extremely obvious. Clithero is a madman, whose liberty is dangerous, and who requires to be fettered and imprisoned as the most atrocious criminal.

I hastened to the chief Magistrate, who is my friend, and, by proper representations, obtained from him authority to seize Clithero wherever I should meet with him, and effectually debar him from the perpetration of new mischiefs.

New-York does not afford a place of confinement for lunatics as suitable to his case as Pennsylvania. I was desirous of placing him as far as possible from the place of my wife's residence. Fortunately, there was a packet for Philadelphia on the point of setting out on her voyage:

voyage: this vessel I engaged to wait a day or two, for the purpose of conveying him to the Pennsylvania hospital. Meanwhile, proper persons were stationed at Powel's-hook, and at the quays where the various stage-boats from Jersey arrive.

These precautions were effectual. Not many hours after the receipt of your intelligence, this unfortunate man applied for a passage at Elizabeth town, was seized the moment he set his foot on shore, and was forthwith conveyed to the packet, which immediately set sail.

I designed that all these proceedings should be concealed from the servants; but unfortunately neglected to take suitable measures for hindering the letter which

which you gave me reason to expect on the ensuing day, from coming into their hands: it was delivered to my wife in my absence, and opened immediately by her.

You know what is at present her personal condition; you know what strong reasons I had to prevent any danger or alarm from approaching her: terror could not assume a shape more ghastly than this. The effects have been what might have been easily predicted: her own life has been imminently endangered, and an untimely birth has blasted my fondest hope. Her infant, with whose future existence so many pleasures were entwined, *is dead.*

I assure

I assure you, Edgar, my philosophy has not found itself lightsome and inactive under this burden. I find it hard to forbear commenting on your rashness in no very mild terms: you acted in direct opposition to my counsel, and to the plainest dictates of propriety. Be more circumspect and more obsequious for the future.

You knew the liberty that would be taken of opening my letters; you knew of my absence from home during the greatest part of the day, and the likelihood, therefore, that your letters would fall into my wife's hands before they came into mine. These considerations should have prompted you to send them, under cover, to Whitworth or Harvey, with

with directions to give them immediately to *me*.

Some of these events happened in my absence; for I determined to accompany the packet myself, and see the madman safely delivered to the care of the hospital.

I will not torture your sensibility by recounting the incidents of his arrest and detention. You will imagine that his strong, but perverted reason exclaimed loudly against the injustice of his treatment. It was easy for him to outreason his antagonist, and nothing but force could subdue his opposition. On me devolved the province of his jailer and his tyrant; a province which required a heart more steeled by spectacles of suf-

fering, and the exercise of cruelty, than mine had been.

Scarcely had we passed *The Narrows* when the lunatic, being suffered to walk the deck, as no apprehensions were entertained of his escape in such circumstances, threw himself overboard, with a seeming intention to gain the shore. The boat was immediately manned, the fugitive was pursued; but at the moment when his flight was overtaken, he forced himself beneath the surface, and was seen no more.

With the life of this wretch let our regrets and our forebodings terminate. He has saved himself from evils for which no time would have provided a remedy, from lingering for years in the noisome dungeon

dungeon of a hospital. Having no reason to continue my voyage, I put myself on board a coasting sloop, and regained this city in a few hours. I persuade myself that my wife's indisposition will be temporary. It was impossible to hide from her the death of Clithero and its circumstances. May this be the last arrow in the quiver of Adversity!—Farewell!

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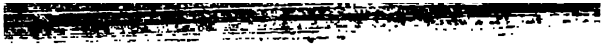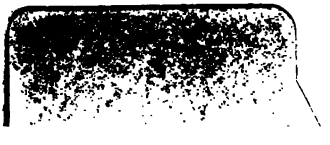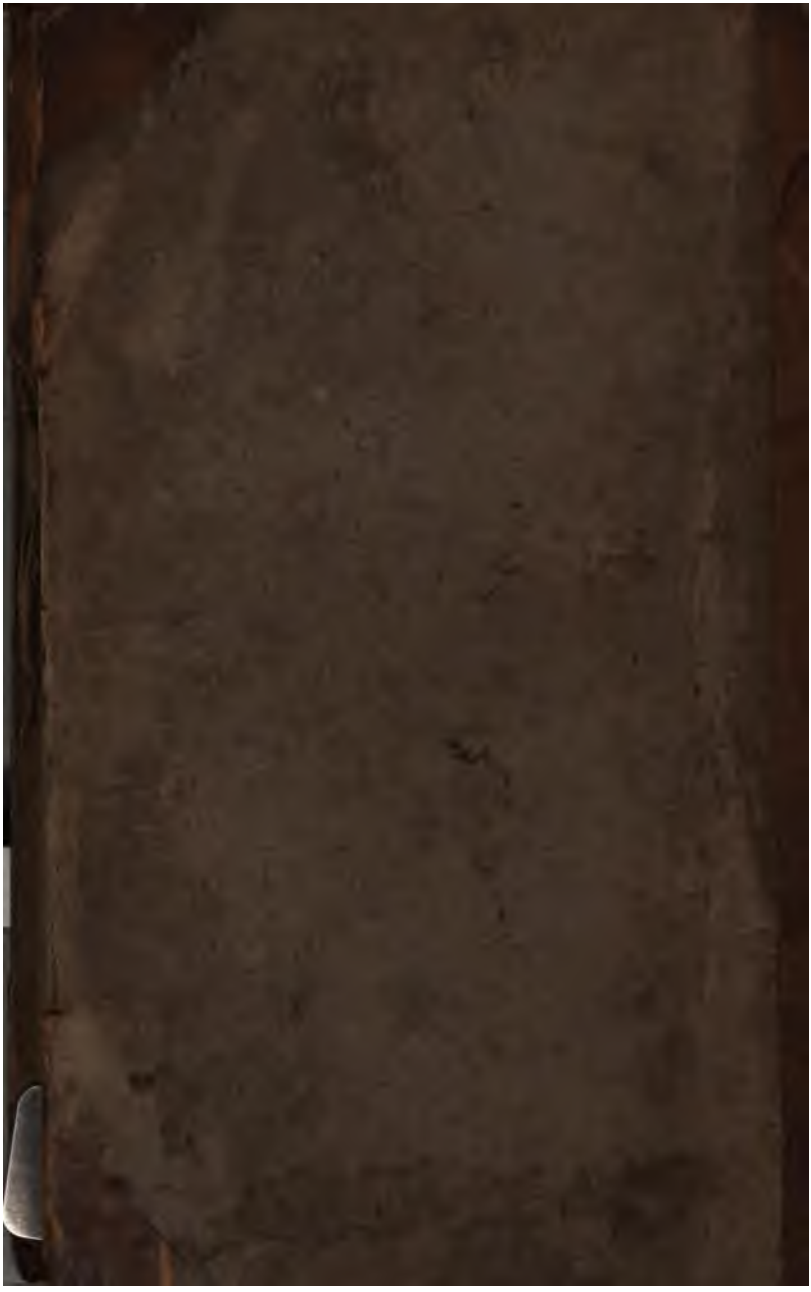
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